Commentary

VOLUME NINETY THREE • NUMBER SIX • JUNE 1992

Israel Watch

A regular new feature devoted to countering the stepped-up ideological and political war against Israel, and beginning this month with:

The Patriot Smear & Its Progeny
David Bar-Illan

The New Anti-Catholicism
George Weigel

Yes, Oswald Alone Killed Kennedy
Jacob Cohen

Seeing the Nakedness of His Father
Leon R. Kass

Are Girls Shortchanged in School?
Rita Kramer

How to Read "Crime and Punishment"
Gary Saul Morson

Books in Review: Elliott Abrams/Philip Gourevitch/Evelyn Toynton/Heather MacDonald/Michael Ledeen

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Commentary

VOLUME 93 NUMBER SIX *JUNE 1992*

Israel Watch 21 The Patriot Smear & Its Progeny *David Bar-Illan*

Articles 25 The New Anti-Catholicism *George Weigel*

32 Yes, Oswald Alone Killed Kennedy *Jacob Cohen*

41 Seeing the Nakedness of His Father *Leon R. Kass*

Observations 48 Are Girls Shortchanged in School? *Rita Kramer*

49 How to Read *Crime and Punishment* *Gary Saul Morson*

Letters 4 from *James Hudson, James S. Rogers, Myron Lieberman, Pierre M. Atlas, Norman Podhoretz, Robert H. Eisenman, Robert Alter, Mark Allison, Arch Puddington, Charlotte Smith, Daniel C. Smolens, Naomi Munson, Terry Teachout, Robert Greer Cohn, Lorraine Spurge,* and others

Books in Review 54 The Imperial Temptation, by Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson *Elliott Abrams*

57 The Death of an American Jewish Community, by Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon *Philip Gourevitch*

59 Edna St. Vincent Millay: Selected Poems, edited by Colin Falck *Evelyn Toynton*

61 The Disuniting of America, by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *Heather MacDonald*

63 October Surprise, by Gary Sick *Michael Ledeen*

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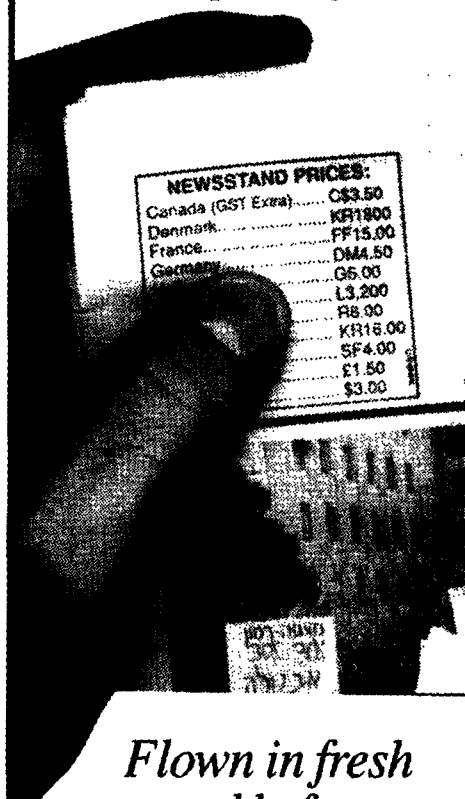

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Letters from Readers

Anti-Semitism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was disappointed in Norman Podhoretz's article, "What Is Anti-Semitism? An Open Letter to William F. Buckley, Jr." [February], because he made no real effort to define anti-Semitism. For example, he quotes himself as follows: "Historically anti-Semitism has taken the form of labeling certain vices and failings as specifically Jewish when they are in fact common to all humanity . . . as though Jews were uniquely or disproportionately guilty of . . . those sins." He complains that Buckley's response to this is obtuse. . . . But surely it is true that Jews—or any other ethnic, religious, or racial group—have their characteristic vices. I don't think Mr. Podhoretz would want to slap the "anti-Semitism" label on a *truth*. No doubt there are also vices which are uncharacteristic of Jews. If someone says: "Jews display vice X in greater proportion than mankind as a whole, and they display vice Y in lesser proportion," would Mr. Podhoretz want to label his remark "half anti-Semitic, half pro-Semitic"? . . .

One might say that the attribution of a characteristic vice to Jews is anti-Semitic in cases where the attribution is incorrect—that is, when Jews do not in fact display that vice in greater proportion than mankind as a whole. Then we might wonder about some of Mr. Podhoretz's examples. For instance, aren't Jews on the average more ambitious than people on the average? (I go along with his characterization of ambition as a vice, just for the sake of argument.) And given the conditions under which they have lived—as despised outsiders, for the most part—it would be surprising if they had not become more clannish than the people they were living among. In any case, establishing that a remark is anti-Semitic is going to take some detailed sociological investigation, most of which has not been carried out.

Another idea is that anti-Semitism consists in making or expressing a more unfavorable judgment about Jews than is made about other groups, even on the same evidence. If Jews and Sicilians are equally clannish—both exceeding the average clannishness of mankind—but the facts are used to support an unfavorable judgment only about Jews, and not about Sicilians, perhaps *then* the speaker is being anti-Semitic. But it seems more apt to say he is being pro-Sicilian! Or perhaps Jews are just *very slightly* more clannish than average, but they are judged very harshly for this vice—more harshly than is justified. Maybe *that* is anti-Semitism. (But maybe not.)

I think Buckley must be excused for missing Mr. Podhoretz's meaning. For all he has written about anti-Semitism, I don't think he has clearly said what he thinks it is.

JAMES HUDSON
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz just doesn't get it. There is a simpler explanation for many Americans' resistance to sponsoring Israel than anti-Semitism. What is so sinister about Americans not liking to give Israel over $3 billion a year, bribing its neighbor Egypt $4 billion a year for good behavior, suffering deaths from terrorism and unnecessary police actions, paying too much for fuel (thanks to OPEC), and incurring the wrath of the Muslim world with adverse strategic and economic consequences?

Americans (and Palestinians) are not guilty of the Holocaust, so do not call those of us bad names who do not feel the need to atone for it by acting contrary to American interests and principles. One does not have to be a leftist or an anti-Semite to oppose the policies of Israel which are disturbingly close to colonization, apartheid, and theocracy. Apartheid is an ugly concept but the shoe fits. Nor is Israel a democracy in spirit. There is a religious symbol on its flag which is hardly conducive to Muslim democratic participation in the regime.

By denying a neutral ground between anti- and philo-Semitism, Mr. Podhoretz cynically swells the ranks of alleged anti-Semites, creating a self-serving and self-fulfilling prophecy.

JAMES S. ROGERS
Morenci, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a citizen and a Jew, I am appalled by Norman Podhoretz's ref-

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erence to the "anti-Semitic stench" of Russell Kirk's statement that "not seldom has it seemed as if some neoconservatives mistook Tel Aviv for the capital of the United States." Mr. Podhoretz's eagerness to identify critics of pro-Israel policies as "anti-Semitic" is depressingly similar to the way "anti-black" is used to characterize opponents of affirmative action, quotas, and set-asides. In fact, Kirk's statement should not have been limited to "eminent neoconservatives." I have met some Jews (and some politicians) who are not "eminent neoconservatives" who nevertheless evaluate issues and candidates primarily if not exclusively on the basis of their support for Israel. I do not believe this is the attitude of most Jews or neoconservatives or politicians, but it is sufficiently widespread to be a matter of legitimate concern.

Inasmuch as Mr. Podhoretz undoubtedly knows many more U.S. "Israel first" partisans than I do, he must be well aware of the fact that Kirk's statement expresses a valid concern. Baseless charges of anti-Semitism are not just mistaken; they reveal a willingness to use character assassination to silence or discredit those who believe that the U.S. level of support for Israel exceeds what is in the best interests of the United States.

MYRON LIEBERMAN
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Norman Podhoretz . . . reasons very well. Nevertheless, there is a hollowness in what he says. On the one hand, he "supports" Israel. On the other, he does so only within narrow bounds—it must act in accordance with the wishes of the United States. Since for some 44 years the U.S. has overwhelmingly favored Arab positions and has *never* excoriated them (as it so often does Israel . . .), one is reminded of the old saying, "With friends like these, who needs enemies?" . . .

Virtually all the talks, debates, lectures, books, and articles about Israel, including articles in COMMENTARY, deal with peripheral questions. The basic issue is Israel's *existence*. If U.S. blackmail succeeds and Israel capitulates by surrendering yet another part of the Jewish national homeland, . . . out of which will emerge the second Palestinian Arab state (the first being Jordan), then it follows as inevitably as the night the day that the next attack by the Arabs will probably achieve their long-sought goal: Israel's complete liquidation. So, consciously or otherwise, Norman Podhoretz is aiding the U.S. in its collusion with the Arabs and a mendacious media in so undermining Israel as to cause its downfall. . . .

In 1919 the League of Nations proposed the creation of four national entities: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and the reconstituted nation of Israel. All four had the identical parenthood, yet it is only Israel's borders that are ever questioned. Why not those of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon?

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 . . . supported the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in all of Palestine (a former southern province of Syria). But Britain then *illegally* lopped off 79 percent of this territory (today called Jordan), though sovereignty had never been transferred from the Jewish people. In 1947 the UN, from the remaining Jewish sliver of 22 percent, offered the Jews 10 percent and the Arabs 12 percent, each for its own state. This insulting offer was accepted by the Jews, but rejected by the Arabs who opted publicly for genocidal war against the Jews. . . .

Following the defeat of Germany and Turkey in World War I, the Allies wrested from Turkey its vast land holdings, which had been Turkish lands for 400 years . . . and turned most of them over to the Arabs. Some of the land, however, remained unallocated. Included in that category was Palestine, a place of desert, semi-desert, swampland, unwanted even by Arabs, a land "sitting in sackcloth and ashes," as Mark Twain said. Lord Balfour said that this was not a "gift" to the Jews but a restitution of their lands "stolen" from them in ancient days, and that such a small piece of land would "not be begrudged them by the Arabs." In this, of course, he was wrong. . . .

The Arabs did and do begrudge the Jews land that never belonged to Arabs. In both World War I and World War II the Jews fought with the Allies, while the Arabs fought against the Allies. The Mufti of Jerusalem sat out the war in Berlin

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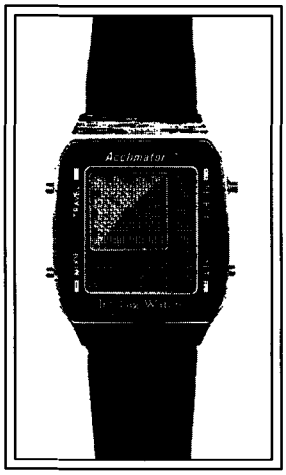

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and Anwar Sadat spent time in prison for aiding the Nazis.

Every people gives a name to its land, but the Arabs had none for "their" land. They called it "Filastin," their version of the name "Palestine" that had been bestowed by the Romans. The Allied gift to the Arabs of former Ottoman-empire lands was twice the size of Europe, containing millions of unused, unpopulated acres and constituting 99 3/4 percent of all the land in the Middle East. The portion given to Israel was one-quarter of 1 percent. . . . Judea, Samaria, and Gaza were acquired by Jordan and Egypt in 1948 by virtue of conquest, which the UN Charter calls "inadmissible." When they reattacked in 1967 Israel reacquired its lands; the only remaining "occupation" was and is the occupation by Jordan of Jewish land.

BERNARD BRODSKY
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's article may help William F. Buckley, Jr. in his "search for anti-Semitism," but it leaves unanswered what Jews should consider anti-Semitism and when to cry out about it. The problem was made clear in a January 8, 1992 Washington *Post* story on the American Jewish Committee's study of anti-Semitism. The study found "anti-Semitism still on [the] decline in the U.S.," although Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) took exception to the findings. Foxman cited "increased anti-Semitism on college campuses and greater tolerance for anti-Semitic expressions." He also mentioned the views of Patrick J. Buchanan, who was the catalyst for Buckley's "search" for anti-Semitism.

As a former ADL professional now retired, I have a high regard for Foxman, and am fully aware of how his perceptions have been shaped by his experiences as a Holocaust survivor. But reacting on the basis of a "gut feeling" is no way to determine the true extent of anti-Semitism today. There are too few studies being made these days. Those I remember from the past found that Americans could be classified as one-third pro-Jewish, regardless of Jewish behavior; one-third, inherent Jew-haters; and the middle one-third the still undecided "swing vote." The role of the Jewish "defense" agencies was to secure that middle third as allies through a program of education, public opinion, and legal efforts. We also sought to make the media responsive, in fighting anti-Semitism, to the principle of "publicity to expose, but none to promote." All this seems to have gone by the board as agencies compete for adherents and supporters.

At times I get the feeling that we Jews are prone to shout "anti-Semitism" much too quickly, forgetting the story of the shepherd boy who cried "wolf" once too often. We also seem more intent on combat than on finding ways to "win friends and influence people." . . .

Some time ago I heard Norman Lear discuss anti-Semitism. He wondered why we Jews are so defensive about Jewish stereotypes. . . . Lear argued that Jews should accept those stereotypes that give them "power," real or unreal. Such stereotypes, while resented, he thought, brought admiration and respect. Why not use them to our advantage? . . .

HYMAN H. HAVES
Pacific Palisades, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

With respect to Norman Podhoretz's discussion of anti-Israel sentiment and anti-Semitism, let me suggest the following three criteria. Criticism of Israel is anti-Semitism if: (1) the facts cited are false; (2) the critic voices only criticism and never approval; and (3) Israel is judged by standards that are not applied to other nations.

MORTIMER OSTOW
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thank you for Norman Podhoretz's thoughtful and persuasive open letter to William F. Buckley, Jr. He has critiqued both Buckley's search and his conclusions with emotion beautifully controlled. . . .

VICTOR N. LOW
Lyme, New Hampshire

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

William F. Buckley, Jr.'s bold initiative and Norman Podhoretz's persuasive reply are, one hopes, the opening salvos in a continuing debate. An open exchange of ideas of this kind may prove to be cathartic in the long run. . . .

We have long known how pervasive anti-Semitism was among the Brahmins of the Northeast and within many of the most prominent American families. . . . Now William F. Buckley, Jr., himself the son of a prominent family, reveals its depth and scope. . . . Buckley's courage in pushing aside some of the wraps that have covered the skeletons in his father's house is both impressive and admirable. While he may be poorly equipped to ferret out true anti-Semitism from under the myriad disguises it assumes, he is eminently qualified to furnish us with greater insights and understanding of what motivated men like his father to instill hatred and contempt in their children. How was it possible that God-fearing and conservative men winked at their children's burning and desecrating of symbols of holiness and at their acts of transgression on other people's property?

By resurrecting these ghosts, Buckley provides a unique opportunity to generations of descendants of privilege to come face to face with the ugliness, perversity, and insidiousness of anti-Semitism. . . .

RUTH JANKO
Bayside, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I agree with 95 percent of Norman Podhoretz's article and have no real quarrel with William F. Buckley, Jr. . . . Nevertheless, I think that anti-Semitism is something that basically only a Jew can understand. Jean-Paul Sartre's famous essay on the subject missed the point. There is no way to rationalize an anti-Semite. To my mind Patrick J. Buchanan is much more dangerous than David Duke. . . . Duke is too obvious. It is the subtle anti-Semite we must fear and Jews sense these instinctively.

Israel is the litmus test of today's anti-Semites both on the Left and the Right, of the [Alexander] Cockburns and the [Joseph] Sobrans. Witness how when Jews do not react to violence against them, they are called cowards; when they do, they are called arrogant aggressors. Perhaps the Gentile world does not like to be reminded that they too were on the passive side when Jewish annihilation was going on during World II or when a similar threat loomed upon the outbreak of the Six-Day War. . . .

DANIEL SPICEHANDLER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

William F. Buckley, Jr.'s analysis and conclusions in his essay, "In

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Search of Anti-Semitism," reminded me of why I decided several years ago not to renew my subscription to *National Review*. While Buckley has, on many occasions, shown a willingness to tackle the tough issues, I have often been disappointed by a tendency (in his pieces as well as in his magazine in general) to pull punches when it comes to dealing with unsavory positions, actions, or remarks of those deemed to be in the conservative camp. As a Jew, being naturally sensitive to anti-Semitism, and as a graduate student in political science, I found such a double standard particularly disconcerting in this case.

To me, anti-Semitism is best conceptualized as a continuum, ranging from "mild" to "extreme." (All forms of bigotry, in fact, could be analyzed along such a continuum.) At the mild end, one could list the social prejudices of "country-club anti-Semitism," as portrayed in the film *Gentleman's Agreement*, and, I would argue, in the discussions of the Philadelphia Society's 1986 meeting that was described in Buckley's essay. As I read the details of this meeting, I could sense the atmosphere of prejudice that filled the room; it was a sickening sensation, exacerbated by the knowledge that I could probably agree with some of the other opinions of the members. I found it disappointing that Buckley was so easily able to write off their anti-Jewish prejudices as being merely pro-Christian and anti-Israel.

This, of course, begs a question of central importance to the search for contemporary anti-Semitism: namely, does anti-Zionism necessarily reflect an underlying anti-Jewish bias? Much of Buckley's analysis is devoted to this question and, along with Norman Podhoretz, I am comfortable for the most part with his conclusions here. While one can, of course, be opposed to Israel's policies without being anti-Semitic, anti-Zionism does provide a convenient—and often used—refuge for the modern Jew-hater. The difficulty lies in uncovering the anti-Semite who cloaks himself in anti-Israel rhetoric. How can this be done? I would posit that clues can be found in a close scrutiny of the reasoning and wording of a person's opposition to Israel and/or its policies; the mechanisms suggested by Mr. Podhoretz in his article "J'Accuse" [COMMENTARY, September 1982] and restated in his "Open Letter," should prove adequate.

One of my greatest disappointments with Buckley's essay, then, lies in his interpretation and conclusions concerning the writings of his colleague, Joseph Sobran. The most damning evidence against Sobran in the essay consists of Sobran's own words, especially his letter to Buckley. My own conclusion (to me, a self-evident one) is that Sobran is a Jew-hater, no less anti-Semitic than his liberal nemesis, Gore Vidal. Sobran's language and rhetoric may be more subtle and sophisticated, but all the catchwords are there, and his message is just as brutal and disturbing as Vidal's. . . . While Buckley's loyalty to a friend is admirable, I fear it has clouded his vision. When comparing his defense of Sobran as a mere "kook" to his well-worded and justified assault on Vidal, I see a double standard. . . .

As for Patrick J. Buchanan, his anti-Semitism is also made evident by his own words, both past and present. . . . Buckley fails to put Buchanan's "America first" campaign into its proper historical perspective: . . . Buchanan's anti-Semitism is only one component of his general xenophobia, and his vision of "traditional America" is but one step in logic away from that of Duke's "white America."

Anti-Semitism is a fancy word for anti-Jewish bigotry. Like all forms of bigotry, it can range from mild exclusionary prejudice to extreme violence. But unlike any other bigotry, it has existed for two thousand continuous years (with no end in sight), and has led to the philosophical and legal sanctioning of mass murder by both church and state. . . . Not all specific acts of anti-Semitism necessarily lead to the extreme end of the continuum—advocacy of, and action toward, the total extermination of a people. But the ultimate, logical conclusion of any form of anti-Semitism is its extreme. This is why all anti-Semitic acts, no matter how "mild," are so potentially dangerous. . . .

PIERRE M. ATLAS
Tucson, Arizona

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . On several occasions William F. Buckley, Jr. has made snide remarks about 100,000 Jewish settlers controlling 800,000 Arabs in Judea and Samaria. This from a man who was strongly in favor of the continued rule over millions of blacks by 250,000 whites in Rhodesia.

As for Buckley's anger over Martin Peretz's comment that "the old Catholic Right has always had trouble with the Jewish problem": one of the reasons the Vatican gives for nonrecognition of Israel is the lack of defined borders, but this did not stop the Vatican from recognizing Catholic Croatia which has a very undefined southern border. . . .

MARVIN P. COHEN
New Milford, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz, in his open letter to William F. Buckley, Jr., discusses Patrick J. Buchanan's conspicuous anti-Semitism. While we all understand the obvious danger that Buchanan's anti-Semitism represents to the Jews, what is less clearly understood and rarely discussed is its negative consequences for America itself.

If Buchanan were to come to power, he might choose a foreign

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(and Middle East) policy largely on the basis of what is detrimental to Israel's interests, even if that policy were to harm America's interests as well. This could explain the conservative Buchanan's unusual opposition to the Gulf War, the first American war he ever opposed. Even though this military effort was clearly in America's economic and strategic interests (especially from a conservative, Republican standpoint), the problem for Buchanan was that it was inadvertently in Israel's interests as well. This theory could also explain his endorsement of a Palestinian state, which is opposed by both Bush and Baker, . . . and which could harm both America and Israel by adding a new measure of instability to the Middle East. . . . It could also explain why this sophisticated journalist simplistically opposes all foreign aid. Though such aid serves America's strategic interests as well, he would blindly sacrifice this gain in order to withhold aid from Israel. . . .

It is perplexing that a right-wing conservative who once admired Menachem Begin and favored annexing the West Bank is now applauding the leftist Israeli Labor party, Shimon Peres, and the establishment of a Palestinian state. This . . . is as inexplicable as it would be if Buchanan decided to support Jesse Jackson and came out in favor of expanding the welfare system, widening affirmative-action programs, and raising taxes. Should Buchanan's slogan really be "America first," or are some of his policies more descriptive of the slogan "Jews last," no matter what the negative consequences are to America? . . .

MORTON A. KLEIN
President, American Zionist Federation
Greater Philadelphia Chapter
Merion, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I am persuaded, as apparently is Norman Podhoretz, that Patrick J. Buchanan criticizes Israel on the basis of a double standard, rooted in the ancient traditions of anti-Semitic propaganda. However, I have trouble proving this to people. . . . How does one demonstrate it?

Joshua Muravchik has certainly documented anti-Semitic statements by Buchanan in his article, "Patrick J. Buchanan and the Jews" [COMMENTARY, January 1991], and by now there is more to be added, . . . but I think Buchanan has been vague—no doubt deliberately—about his Israel policy. Buchanan's views on the Jewish lobby (though I think he avoids that locution) hardly predict his Israel policy, and they are unfortunately common coin inside the Beltway. . . .

Muravchik, though it was not his main purpose, goes some way toward showing Buchanan's double standard toward Israel as well, . . . but this double standard *could* turn on some attribute of Israel other than its Jewishness. For instance, the attribute that the only factor unifying the otherwise fractious Arab states which control an essential resource is implacable opposition to Israel's existence. . . . I imagine this particular attribute is what motivated President Reagan's condemnation of Israel's 1981 bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, but though I think Reagan was wrong, I do not suspect him of anti-Semitism. Apparently "realists" regard a double standard *on that basis* as being in the American interest. . . .

I think we need a description of an appropriate American policy toward Israel, or at least the appropriate presumptions for such a policy, with litmus tests for whether deviations are the result of (1) legitimate considerations of American interest, or (2) anti-Semitism, or (3) neither of the above. . . .

ROBERTO ALAZAR
Reseda, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I think we are all making too much of a fuss about Patrick J. Buchanan's remarks. . . . When the Jews register their collective views as members of some Jewish organization or lobby, objections to these views may look anti-Jewish when in fact they are simply the result of political differences. The really dangerous anti-Semitism today comes almost completely from the Left.

The Holocaust taught us to be sensitive about this because it showed that a slight prejudice against the Jews, carried to its logical conclusion, might lead to the gas chambers. Still, we all know very polished individuals both in the private and public sphere who would never let slip an anti-Jewish remark, but who might very well serve, if the time were ripe, as future Eichmanns and Ivan the Terribles. On the other hand, there are some people who are capable, in the heat of debate, of insensitive and even insulting slips of the tongue, but in a bad time would risk their own lives hiding and protecting Jews.

I know little about Buchanan, but it is my perception that he is such a person. . . . What he does not realize is that his slips could provoke a situation where the Jews would once again be in need of protection. For example, his remark about soldiers with non-Jewish names who would do the actual fighting in the Gulf while the pro-Israel lobby advocates the war, is ugly and reminiscent of Soviet propaganda claiming that the Jews hid out in Soviet Middle Asia to avoid fighting in World War II. (In fact, when the war was over, it became known that the number of Jews awarded the highest military honor of Hero of the Soviet Union far exceeded the proportion of Jews in the Soviet population—and this in spite of the fact that anti-Semitism reduced the number of honors given to Jews.)

Still, the major problem with Buchanan is not his anti-Semitic remarks but his isolationist politics, . . . and this should be the central point in criticizing him. . . . The honor and glory of America are in its permanent commitment to the world. Americans may be angry about Japanese and European competition, but I cannot find another example in history of a victor making such enormous and effective efforts to raise defeated nations as America did with Germany and Japan. The major problem with Buchanan is his desire to deprive our nation of this great historical tradition. . . .

DAVID M. SHUR
Berkeley Heights, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I was brought up in Vienna where anti-Semitism was imbibed by babies of all religions along with their mother's milk. Ultimately, my entire family was exterminated by the Hitler hordes. . . .

Nowadays anti-Semitism has gone underground for the most part and operates mainly by innuendo. While one may welcome the demise of overt anti-Semitism, it is an even more difficult task to fight this monster once it has become invisible, and therefore harder to spot and to attack.

FREDERICK C. KRAMER
Wilmette, Illinois

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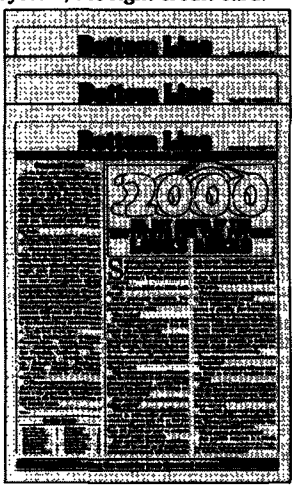

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have not encountered personal anti-Semitism since my escape from Nazi Europe more than 50 years ago. I have, of course, seen reports on hate groups, but accepted their existence as insignificant. . . . Now, however, Norman Podhoretz's forceful article has alerted me to the intrusion of anti-Semitism into the national arena and stirred up some old memories and thoughts. . . .

Tribal rivalry is an age-old phenomenon, yet it still survives in various parts of the world in the form of chauvinism and hostility against minorities, whether indigenous or more recently arrived in the country. In addition to sharing minority status with most inhabitants of America, . . . Jews still carry the stigma of centuries of vilification by Christian teaching, even though this has recently been revised. Thus, although . . . Buckley was able to liberate himself from the residual prejudices of his Christian upbringing, he was unable to convince his "beloved disciple," Joseph Sobran, that anti-Semitism is wrong and evil. By describing Patrick J. Buchanan's anti-Semitic remarks with innocent charm as only a lapse into "mischievous generalizations," Buckley unwittingly put his finger on the central unpardonable sin which is in fact the insidious tool of bigots. I refer to the practice of identifying individual criminals, professional competitors, political opponents and dissenters, etc., etc. as members of specific minorities in order to defame entire communities through generalization. On the television show, *Larry King Live,* I heard Buchanan use this kind of generalization in reverse when, in answer to a question about his alleged anti-Semitism, he denied it and added as evidence that he had received campaign contributions from a few friends who are Jewish. Buchanan's pretense that this proves his good relationship with "the Jews" is, indeed, an example of mischievous generalization, otherwise known as *chutzpah.*

Ambitious politicans of past and present have known the power of appeals to racism. That technique has helped to keep old hatreds in existence and to generate unlikely new ones, such as black anti-Semites. When I was growing up in Europe, it was used by right-wing nationalists with disastrous consequences for their victims and themselves. Then, after World War II, the rulers of Communist countries, whose lofty ideals had been equality and universal brotherhood, tried to cover up their own failure by attacking their tiny surviving Jewish minorities. Now, after glasnost, open hostility has broken out among national units liberated from the former Soviet empire and its satellites.

In the United States there is a remarkable amount of tolerance and good will. It is an absolute necessity in a democratic, pluralistic society founded . . . and built by immigrants of diverse races and colors, all of whom have the right to live peacefully side by side. . . .

Hostile remarks made publicly, whether from personal conviction or political appeal, cannot be simply denied or explained away . . . after they have backfired and become an embarrassment to the speaker. Such statements have been written, rehearsed, and read aloud from scripts. There is no excuse for anti-isms of any kind and no place for divisive narrow-mindedness in candidates for high public office in a country whose Constitution holds it to be indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

CHARLES TERNER
Newton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I want to thank Norman Podhoretz for "What Is Anti-Semitism?" I read William F. Buckley, Jr.'s article in *National Review* and, while it confirmed my feeling that he was a "righteous Gentile," I was left with a queasy feeling about his first adducing anti-Semitic evidence and then rationalizing the resulting logical conclusion into thin air. . . . Mr. Podhoretz has cleared up much of my confusion. . . .

The best example I know on this question, substituting the Jews of Europe for Israel, is that of Harold Nicolson. As a high-level functionary in the British Foreign Office in the late 30's, Nicolson was appalled at the evidence of what the Nazis were preparing for the Jews and at what he felt was his government's . . . conscious avoidance of this evidence. In discussing this in his diary, he added that he himself just could not stand to be in the company of Jews.

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

James Hudson is disappointed in me for not attempting to define anti-Semitism in a way that would satisfy him as a professor of philosophy. But I doubt that such a definition is possible. Anti-Semitism is not a systematic set of propositions but rather a passion or animus which seeks to justify itself by charges against the Jewish people (and in our day against the Jewish state) that are naturally said to be true. Mr. Hudson seems to think that some of these rationalizations are indeed true—for example, that Jews are more clannish than other peoples. Yet it is hard to see in what sense a group capable of a 50-percent intermarriage rate is intrinsically clannish, let alone disproportionately so. Nor were the Jews any more clannish (for better or worse) than the peoples they lived among in the past in less liberal societies than our own. The very fact—cited by Mr. Hudson—that such peoples, whether Christian or Muslim, were either unable or unwilling to accept the Jews (or any other minority) as equals shows how clannish *they* were.

So too (again for better or worse) with ambition. When Jews either were forced or were content to remain among their own, they were accused of clannishness; but no sooner did they develop the desire to move into the surrounding society than they were met with charges of aggressive ambition (or pushiness). Heads you win, tails you lose: always the sign of an animus that will seize upon any rationalization whatsoever to keep itself going.

Obviously the well-known double standard was also operating here. For the very qualities that were seen as vices in Jews were apt to be accepted as normal or even represented as virtues in others. Thus, what was stigmatized as "clannishness" in Jews was often praised as patriotism or a sense of responsibility for one's own when it manifested itself in the majority group; and what was lauded as "the Protestant ethic" among Protestants became, in the eyes of these very same Protestants, pushiness and greed among Jews.

This kind of trick as applied to the Jewish state results in precisely the charges leveled by James Rogers. In condemning Israel for the sin of colonization, Mr. Rogers is in effect turning the old charge of

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aggressive ambition against the Jewish state; and in condemning Israel for practicing apartheid and theocracy, he is translating the old charge of clannishness into language suitable for defaming the Jewish polity.

I certainly have no wish to "swell the ranks of alleged anti-Semites," but I would beg Mr. Rogers to consider the extent to which his attacks on Israel actually do echo the attacks that used to be—and in some quarters still are—made by anti-Semitic propagandists against Jews in the Diaspora. I would also urge him to ponder the historical section of Bernard Brodsky's letter, which conclusively refutes the charge of "colonization," and to acquaint himself with the plain facts of Israeli society, which make nonsense of the charges of apartheid and theocracy.

Myron Lieberman, for his part, claims that yet another familiar anti-Semitic canard—the charge of dual loyalty—is true and therefore cannot be anti-Semitic. But can he really be saying that the American Jews he calls "Israel first" partisans are not loyal to the United States? Is he really unaware of the fact that, unlike him, they are absolutely convinced that strong support of Israel *is* in the best interests of the United States?

Ironically, Bernard Brodsky accuses *me* of insufficient support for Israel and of too much deference to "the wishes of the United States." And from his point of view, U.S. policy, far from being excessive in its support of Israel, as Mr. Lieberman would have it, "has overwhelmingly favored Arab positions." Well, in my judgment Mr. Brodsky wildly exaggerates the pro-Arab tilt of American policy over the years, just as Mr. Lieberman does its pro-Israel bent—though at this moment, alas, Mr. Brodsky looks less wrong than Mr. Lieberman.

I thank all the other correspondents for their thoughtful comments and their generous words.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We find Robert Alter's article, "How Important Are the Dead Sea Scolls?" [February], to be misleading and in poor taste on a large number of points. . . .

Most striking are his belittling comments about Michael Baigent's and Richard Leigh's excellent book, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*, based in large measure on the research of Robert Eisenman of California State University at Long Beach. Messrs. Baigent and Leigh do not claim that the Vatican secretly controlled and suppressed scroll material, as Mr. Alter contends. They do state, however, that the Vatican and high Vatican officials were in a position to influence the outcome of the research studies, and that the "scholars" of the Ecole Biblique did in fact have a great deal more than a pure historian's interest in the outcome of that research. . . .

The significant issue here is whether individuals with very strong and possibly conflicting outside allegiances can properly review the kind of material to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The issue is also whether individuals of a morally depraved character, such as can be attributed to Père Roland de Vaux, J.T. Milik, John Strugnell, and others at the Ecole Biblique in East Jerusalem, should have been entrusted with the scrolls. There is a real question as to whether the work of such individuals should not be discarded as untrustworthy. These so-called scholars were admittedly anti-Semites, and anti-Semitism must not be treated lightly. . . .

As regards the dating of the scrolls, credible scientific inquiry would not accept the "consensus" view so quickly—particularly when the consensus has been formed in large part by the Ecole Biblique team. Paleographic and carbon-14 dating is in any case unreliable, particularly when attempting to establish an early boundary on a date. Certainly authors can and often do write in a script perhaps hundreds of years old, particularly for biblical-type materials . . . and the authors of the scrolls might very well have saved the probably expensive and "imported" papyrus for decades before using it. In any case, independent of their precise dating, the scrolls do confirm the virtual total dependence of early Christianity on Judaic source materials. . . .

Contrary to Mr. Alter's assertion, it is not established at all that the community of Qumran came to an end around 68 C.E. There was obviously dramatic turmoil at that time because of the first rebellion against Rome, but neither the constancy of the settlement's character nor the duration of its exist-

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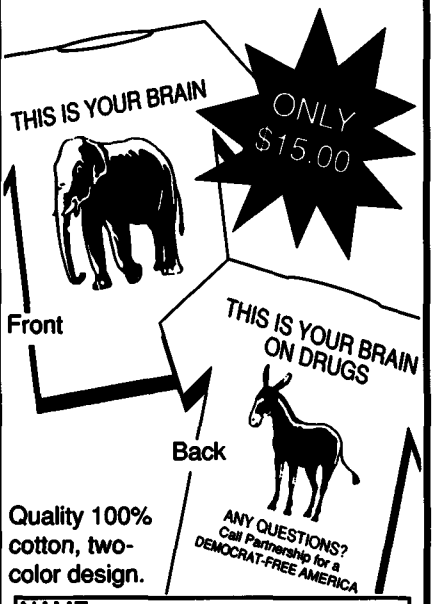

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ence are known with such accuracy.

Finally, it is difficult to understand precisely what Mr. Alter is talking about when he dwells on the "crucial" distinction among the terms, "Preacher of Lies," "Pourer Out of Lies," and "Dripper Out of Lies" in connection with Robert Eisenman's theory that "the Liar" in the scrolls is Paul. The difference in terminology appears to be of no importance.

Because much of the scroll material has been released only recently, it would appear that a valid consensus view is still some years away. For the time being, since a good deal of the present consensus derives from the "scholars" at the Ecole Biblique, we would rather hear from other sources, independent of that consensus.

VICTOR GALINDO
DAVID ROCHBLATT
Glendale, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Alter's article illustrates the problem of having people with little abiding interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls hold forth on the subject. Dependent on the view of "experts" before him, Mr. Alter misses most of the subtleties and nuances of the present debate and writes about the scrolls as if he were personally offended by them. . . . It is hard to conceive how in the midst of this swirl of exciting new information and ideas about the scrolls, someone could remain so blinkered. In this he differs little from establishment commentators since the early 50's who downplayed the importance of the scrolls and for the last 35 years lulled the public into thinking there was nothing there.

Take, for example, Mr. Alter's treatment of my ideas: . . . he sets me up as a straw man but never explains what my main points are. . . . He makes it very clear that he has not read anything I have written, except second- or third-hand, much less grasped its import.

When he does come to wrestle with my ideas in a few short sentences, he does so on the basis of a minor point made in passing, and in no way intrinsic to my arguments, i.e., that a *possible* reading for "the Spouter" (of Lying) at Qumran—the ideological adversary of the Righteous Teacher—might be "the Pourer out of Lying." Assuming I purposefully suggested this reading to emphasize the baptismal imagery and so to relate it even more forcefully to Paul, he misses the main thrust of the allusion involved, i.e., to "Lying" and "the Liar." But these are themselves sufficient to relate allusions of this kind to Paul in both Jewish and Christian tradition. . . .

By dismissing a major opposition theory like this on the basis of a minor point not intrinsic to that theory, Mr. Alter, like many in "the network" to which he is connected, relies on sophistical arguments based on the mastery he wishes us to think he has of philology, etymology, lexicography, etc. to try to overwhelm a deferential public with his erudition. Unfortunately for his argument, however, if he were familiar with the whole expanse of Qumran literature he would know that in *The Damascus Document* the lying opponent of the Righteous Teacher *is* referred to in terms of "pouring out the waters of lying." Aside from demonstrating the homogeneity of this kind of language and allied concepts across the whole expanse of Qumran documents, . . . Mr. Alter's claim about there being no relationship to "pouring out" or even "waters" associated with the "lying" terminology is simply uninformed.

Nor does he scratch the surface of the parallels between the literature at Qumran and the person of James and his arguments with Paul in the formative years of Christianity in Palestine from the 40's to the 60's C.E. . . .

Mr. Alter's presentation of the scrolls saga too is simplistic and inaccurate. He would have your readers believe that the Israel Antiquities Authority under General Amir Drori . . . moved to release the scrolls on its own and not because of the pressure we generated. The anti-Semitic and anti-Israel attitudes of some on the International Scrolls Committee, with whom the Antiquities Authority cooperated for twenty years or more, are dismissed with nothing worse than a slap on the wrist and nothing about how such attitudes vitiate their scholarly and historical objectivity. In the same manner, Harvard's John Strugnell, Père Roland de Vaux's right-hand man at the Ecole Biblique since the 50's, is let off the hook with the comment that he was not an "emotional" anti-Semite, only a "doctrinal" one. One could say the same about Eichmann.

While Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, authors of the best-selling *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*, are criticized because of their dependence on me, Mr. Alter feels free to borrow important information from them, without, of course, indicating his indebtedness, as, for example, in his mention of the fact that Père de Vaux . . . was a member of the fascist Action Française in the 20's. . . . As if privy to other insider information, Mr. Alter pretends that he knows where the photographs came from for the *Facsimile Edition* of the scrolls (published by the Biblical Archaeology Society), a volume I helped to prepare, and mentions one Najib Albina in this connection. This is totally fallacious and I deny it categorically.

In the same vein, he would have your readers believe that Baigent and Leigh, whom he calls "young," have "swallowed Eisenman's theories whole." But again, he is completely dependent on them and on me for his analysis of the Ecole Biblique's control over the principal unpublished manuscripts, as no one had previously called attention to this, or to its role in promulgating the "Essene Hypothesis" [the identification of the Qumran group with the sect of the Essenes]. Nor does he point out that the ultimate effect of this theory was to rescue the idea of the uniqueness of Jesus.

In the same manner, when attempting to dismiss my theories, Mr. Alter calls any attempt to link characters like James the Just or Paul to the scrolls "sensationalist." But why? If this is sensationalist, and *a priori* beyond the scope of Qumran studies, then how are we to proceed in this field if things of this nature turn out to be true? On the other hand, his own presentation of Jewish sects and the history behind the scrolls is thoroughly humdrum. Nor does he understand the ideological development of the literature at Qumran as it moves in its last stages to something very close to what goes by the name of "Palestinian Christianity" in the 1st century.

It is, however, in the second part of his essay that Mr. Alter completely reveals himself. Like many in "the charmed circle" in Qumran studies, he has an almost visceral dislike of the group under consideration . . . grounded, in his case, in his affection for rabbinic Judaism. Of course, with this attitude it

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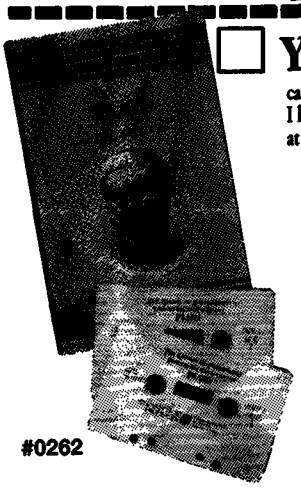

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is *a priori* impossible to assess the importance of the scrolls, as his article pretends to do. On page 39 of his article, he expresses the real reason for his antipathy: "The sectarians themselves are hardly the sort of ancestors whom either Jews or Christians would want to rush to claim." He reinforces this value judgment with: "In terms of the evolution of religion, they actually represent a dead end, not a nourishing source of either Judaism or Christianity." In this view he resembles other members of the Qumran network like Oxford's Geza Vermes, whom he mentions approvingly. . . .

In Mr. Alter's mind everything associated with Qumran is negative. . . . On the other hand, his description of Pauline Christianity, which he calls "a bold synthesis of monotheism with the mythic power of the mystery cults and a translation of theological universalism into a universalism of religious constituency," could hardly be more ecstatic. His praise of rabbinic Judaism is only slightly less restrained, but still positive, "a refashioning of biblical doctrine as an intricate and developing system of law, based on learning, and, at least in principle, accessible to all Jews." . . .

The writings of the Qumran sectarians, on the other hand, are "narrow and rigid and shrill," and he characterizes their literature as colored "with the crude emotional hues of apocalyptic *ressentiment.*" Oblivious to cliché, he waxes poetic: "The air they breathed was an atmosphere of hypnotic words that insulated them from the changing winds of history." Mr. Alter means, of course, that unlike Phariseeism-*cum*-rabbinic-Judaism, the Qumran sectarians refused to accommodate themselves to Rome, and so perished—no doubt violently. Hardly the nationalist, Mr. Alter is rather an apologist for his own neo-Pharisaic attitude of accommodation, and evokes the sectarians' "megalomaniacal self-importance" and "hallucinatory relation to present events," of which he obviously sees the apocalyptic *War Scroll* as a particularly "scary" example. . . .

Mr. Alter's final attempt at metaphor is as cliché-ridden as his others and misses the ball completely: "It is hardly surprising that nothing that would live on in history ever grew in this rocky ground overlooking—spiritually as well as literally—a slate-gray sea of salt."

What a pity Mr. Alter has never seen the Dead Sea in all its manifold colors and splendor on the bluest of blue halcyon days.

ROBERT H. EISENMAN
University of California
Long Beach, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I was dismayed and disappointed by Robert Alter's article. After wading through columns of what he describes as "retrac[ing] . . . the . . . acquisition of the scrolls . . . and their . . . history," I had hoped to come upon the subject of the article as promised in the title. Instead, there was a discursive description of what several people consider to be the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls, followed by some offensively anti-feminine verses—the only examples offered in the article of what the scrolls contain.

These verses (which we are told concern a seduction episode) are offered with no hermeneutics or analysis except for references by the author to "her sexual prey," and "the pleasures of a one-night stand." He also mentions in passing the possibility, suggested by one scholar, that the woman in one of the verses may be an "allegorical representation of false doctrine."

It is very difficult to infer the author's intention in publishing these verses. Does Mr. Alter mean to imply that the importance of the scrolls lies in their continuation of a biblical tradition of woman as evil? Are these verses representative of the scrolls as a whole, or does Mr. Alter simply infer from them that this "crucial period in Western cultural history" was imbued with anti-female rhetoric? . . .

Mr. Alter's attack on the feminine is placed in sharp relief by Norman Podhoretz's open letter to William F. Buckley, Jr., appearing in the same issue, in which the question of possible anti-Semitic utterances by several modern writers is examined in exquisite detail. It is difficult to understand how a publication could be so sensitive to possible slights against Jews, and at the same time publish so blatant a slash at women.

CAROLINE S. WAGNER
Alexandria, Virginia

ROBERT ALTER writes:

If Hershel Shanks's letter in the May issue was marked mainly by the defensiveness of an interested party, the contributions to the discussion by Victor Galindo and David Rochblatt, Robert H. Eisenman, and Caroline S. Wagner illustrate as vividly as the supermarket tabloids cited in my article how the subject of the Dead Sea Scrolls all too easily calls forth the babbling of confused spirits.

The letter from Messrs. Galindo and Rochblatt is a tissue of sweeping overstatements and plain misstatements. Baigent and Leigh were actually so sure that the Vatican was censoring the scrolls that they called their chapter on this topic nothing less than "The Inquisition Today." I would never presume, as Messrs. Galindo and Rochblatt do, to judge any of the players in this bungled scholarly game to be "individuals of a morally depraved character," though John Strugnell is clearly emotionally disturbed. I am the last person to dismiss anti-Semitism lightly, but their blanket condemnation of all the original scrolls scholars as anti-Semites and hence automatically disqualified from scholarship is foolish. The claim of a "virtual total dependence of early Christianity on Judaic source materials" is patently absurd, as a careful scrutiny of the Gospels alongside the scrolls and early rabbinic literature will readily demonstrate. I would hardly expect readers of so cloudy an intelligence to understand even the most rudimentary philological distinctions made in my article.

Robert H. Eisenman is scarcely superior to his two ardent and befuddled defenders. On the subject of anti-Semitism, he even goes them one better by likening John Strugnell to Eichmann, a comparison that is not only profoundly wrong but also morally obnoxious. He at once berates me for being an outsider to scrolls scholarship and accuses me of being "connected" to a "network" of sinister figures in the scrolls establishment. In fact, I raised certain questions about the intrinsic value of the documents that it is not popular to raise in these scholarly circles. Such critical reservations, however, do not prevent me from deciding that the conclusions of scholars like Shemaryahu Talmon and Geza Vermes regarding the dates and provenance of the texts are far more convincing that those of Mr. Eisenman. Cultivating the posture of a "scholarly upstart" out to "shake the academic establishment" is in itself no guarantee of

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the validity of one's views. Mr. Eisenman fancies that I have not read his books, perhaps imagining that no one who had would fail to see their persuasiveness. As a matter of fact, the attribution of "baptismal significance"—the phrase is his, not mine—to the term *matif* occurs in his *James the Just in the Habakuk Pesher* (Leiden, 1988), the only place I could have encountered this claim. I am aware of the image of pouring out waters in the *The Damascus Covenant* (it has various biblical antecedents), but the point I made in my article was that this particular verbal noun cannot mean to pour and certainly has no baptismal associations. Thus a shaky grasp of Hebrew, or a tendentious treatment of it, joins with other, larger implausibilities in Mr. Eisenman's argument. My comments on the contrast between the Qumran covenanters, on the one hand, and early Christianity and rabbinic Judaism, on the other, were informed by an explicitly evolutionary perspective. The Qumranites *were* a dead end, for the good reasons I cited, and whatever fascinations their literature holds, this can hardly be gainsaid. Why Mr. Eisenman should imagine it a virtue for a sect to determine to perish, all the while damning the rest of the world with dour fanaticism, is a mystery to me. Finally, on two factual matters: my source for the identity of the photographer of the scrolls was nothing more arcane than the report in the New York *Times*, and I followed the dust-jacket of the British edition of *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception* in identifying its authors as young, surely not a derogation.

Caroline S. Wagner seems to have read no more than isolated phrases from my article. How else could she have found an "attack on the feminine" in an essay that cites the Qumran Wisdom poem in order to deplore its misogyny? I made perfectly clear, moreover, that I considered the poem to be representative, and that its hostility to women and the flesh was of a piece with the apocalyptic grimness that characterizes far too many of the Qumran texts.

The Black Community

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Clarence Thomas and the Blacks" [February], Arch Puddington hints that a solution to our race-relations problems "may be under way." There is probably more than one solution, provided reasonable people are doing the thinking, but as with many other major social problems, militant advocates at both ends of the spectrum dominate the field and are willing to consider only their own answers. . . .

What the black majority must do is to take the field so that its children and grandchildren may have a good education and a good life. About integration *per se* one finds that this majority is not so much interested in how many blacks, whites, or Asians sit together in one classroom or one workplace as it is in results. The white majority, for its part, sees integration as morally correct and the right thing to do, . . . but the way integration has so far unfolded, it appears to be a losing proposition.

Most people regardless of color want a good education for their children and grandchildren; if a practical solution that is acceptable to the majority fails some test of law, then obviously the law needs some adjusting. . . . Unfortunately, we have allowed militants to take these issues to the courts and keep them there, instead of dealing with them in the social and political arenas where they belong. If the prevailing law prevents an acceptable solution and cannot be changed because one militant extreme or another dominates the politics involved, then that law has failed society and its purpose has been traduced. If a given law fails the constitutional test, it clearly is the task of the legislative branch to formulate an effective legal alternative—not to delegate the passing of a new law to an eager judiciary.

Mr. Puddington mentions the Detroit situation, where majorities favored all-black schools for young males—only to be overridden by a small but militant group. One suspects that, if made to, even Congress could find a legal solution that would accommodate the wishes of majorities. . . .

Why not allow each community to decide whether or not it wants to continue with things as they are (which often includes court-ordered solutions)? For those dissatisfied with the status quo, a variety

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of approaches could be provided, including some degree of separate but equal treatment mandating the same amount of money *per pupil per school* that is now spent on integration, which might be exactly what most people wanted in the first place. If majorities both black and white remain inert, the situation will continue as is.

NORMAN KOLIN
Fort Wayne, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I applaud Arch Puddington for his article, "Clarence Thomas and the Blacks." The black community is plagued with numerous problems that must be solved for real progress to be achieved. Too often, however, that community is constrained by the limited and narrow ideas of the liberal NAACP. Affirmative action and welfare, the mainstay programs of the Left and of the black community for the past 30 years, must be put aside in favor of other, more progressive, alternatives. Stephen L. Carter, in his recent work *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*, reinforces this point. He notes:

> In an era in which a third of black people still live in poverty, when the inner cities are besieged by drugs and crime, when nearly a quarter of our children are themselves having children, we cannot afford the luxury of insisting, in the name of solidarity, that any of our problems has a single, unchallengeable answer.

Carter never said that he was a fan of Clarence Thomas, but he did respect Thomas's willingness to take a stand in the face of the NAACP leadership and reject its ideas. As Carter might say, Thomas is an outcast in the black community, according to the Left, because his ideas do not mesh with the traditional orthodox civil-rights strategies. But Thomas should be honored, as should Thomas Sowell and Congressman Gary Franks, for the public lynching to which they have been subjected for daring to challenge the almighty NAACP. The heroes and martyrs of the black community are those who break ranks and stand apart, as did Martin Luther King, Jr., in order to offer a new vision and approach to the problems of the community.

One new concept that needs to be addressed is economic self-help, though a distinction must be drawn between the self-help ideas of intellectuals like Clarence Thomas and the racist ideology of individuals like Louis Farrakhan. Thomas preaches the notions of empowerment to the poor through education and job training for all Americans. Farrakhan, on the other hand, proselytizes for a kind of apartheid based on cultural and racial isolationism. . . . As we know from American history, segregation does not lead to progress.

It is hoped that the black leadership will overcome its suspicion of intellectual diversity and open the door to new ideas. This could help to establish a fairer and more accurate representation of the black community in Congress and in the state legislatures. Considering how much is at stake, diversity is a logical step.

MARK ALLISON
Jewish Policy Center
Washington, D.C.

ARCH PUDDINGTON writes:

I have little doubt that the intellectual diversity already discernible within black America will continue to grow, but am considerably less certain whether the result will be a national consensus over the causes of, and remedies for, racial inequality. For example, the proposition that single-sex schools for young inner-city black males will produce children who learn more and behave better strikes me as dubious, to say the least, especially when joined with a curriculum centering around a bogus theory of history—Afrocentrism. Nevertheless, the crisis gripping inner-city young men calls for, indeed demands, a tolerance toward experimentation, and it ill behooves the rest of society to oppose new ideas automatically because they are tinged with nationalism or separatism.

Many theories have been put forward to explain the fallacy of comparing blacks with immigrant groups, and while these theories have considerable merit, they invariably lead to one of two dead-ends: either radical separatism or a degree of social engineering only hinted at by the current level of busing and affirmative action.

In the end, blacks will advance as other groups have advanced, by mastering standard English and other basic skills, by learning self-control, adhering to the work ethic, establishing businesses, entering the professions. This, more or less, is the message of the black dissenters. Stephen L. Carter has even expressed the hope that blacks could become the newest model minority. That this message is somehow perceived as conservative, and that those advancing it are regarded as intellectual dissidents, suggests just how confused American thinking on race has become.

Sexual Harassment

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Naomi Munson's article, "Harassment Blues" [February], is the most insightful piece I have ever read on women in the workplace, and the women's movement in general. . . . As a woman in a nontraditional field (I am a silversmith), I have long been embarrassed by the antics of some of the more radical feminists because people assume that I am one of them.

During what seemed the endless days of Anita Hill's testimony, a woman of my acquaintance asked me when I thought women would "finally come into their own." I replied that perhaps I wasn't the person to answer that because learning to use a blowtorch when I became a silversmith had given me a completely different approach to the "empowerment of women." I then asked her, quite sincerely, "What harm has Clarence Thomas done to Professor Hill, even if the charges are true?" I went on to say that being a professor of law is hardly demeaning, that Hill admitted that Thomas helped her to get the job, and that he did not rape her, or even attempt to, so what was her gripe? My friend left in a huff.

As to the women's movement in general, I cannot determine just which women it supposedly includes. The feminists consider housewives contemptible, and nurses and pink-collar workers, who constitute the overwhelming majority of working women, are beneath their notice. And while they try not to be embarrassed by women in very nontraditional fields (e.g., female ironworkers), at bottom, they are uncomfortable with these "freaks." Greatly successful women, as anyone with a jot of sense knows, arrive at the top on their own, through a combination of merit, much sacrifice, and, as Mrs. Munson wisely implies in her article, a bit of good fortune.

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Though they may give an occasional nod publicly to feminism, I would guess that, privately, they are rightfully pleased with their achievements as individuals. I would also guess that they wouldn't be caught dead at one of those women's support groups. Whom does that leave? The mediocre, luckless wonders who, as the author says, whine about "the glass ceiling" upon discovering that "play[ing] with the big boys is simply not as glamorous (or as easy) as they thought."

The great irony, I think, is that the women's movement has made entry into the *genuinely* nontraditional fields much more achievable than before. The women who used to stay at home and build additions onto their houses or fix the toasters of the entire neighborhood are now female electricians, construction workers, tool-and-die makers, and so forth. These women may arguably be the primary beneficiaries of feminism. They would, however, be the last to file sexual-harassment charges or request that a day-care center be put on their construction site.

Thank you again for this outstanding article. It has helped to crystallize my heretofore random thoughts on "harassment blues" and its variations. . . .

CHARLOTTE SMITH
Toledo, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Naomi Munson claims that it was "ideologues who brought us sexual harassment in the first place," but it seems to me that she is acting the ideologue herself when she implies that only overt action can be sexual harassment. In my book, ideologues are people whose devotion to an idea blinds them to elements contradicting that idea which are part of an actual experience. An example is Mrs. Munson's failure to note the difference between her own early work situation, where the women had "vociferously demanded—and been granted—absolutely equal status and were considered fair game," and Anita Hill's situation, in which she was a subordinate and where the rules were not tacitly acknowledged or freely accepted. Thomas was able to impose his attitude and language on her because Hill (for whatever reason—whether out of good judgment or poor) did not want to quit her job. Does Mrs. Munson really equate Hill with the secretaries in her own job situation whose "advancing age and delicate sensibilities consigned them to the sidelines"? (This makes me think of those poor unfortunate lightweights who can't play varsity football.) Hill did not have a choice of "the sidelines."

Would Mrs. Munson consider anti-Semitic language by an employer not harassment but only an anti-Semitic action as such? Certainly in any power situation when one person uses language which demeans the personhood, the human dignity, of another it is not less than harassment.

I feel that Mrs. Munson's antagonism to feminist ideology blinds her to the fact that it was not the Senate committee's job to build a case of sexual harassment (legally) against Judge Thomas. The committee members were trying to make clear (and the proceedings made it sufficiently clear to me) that a man who had it so poorly together in the sexual-emotional area that he inflicted his sexual imaginings on an unwilling (victim) participant . . . is not a balanced enough person to be a judge in the highest court of the country.

Harassment is anything you consciously and persistently say or do (with a particular person in mind) that is unpleasant or otherwise burdensome to someone else. Let's call a spade a spade and not dissolve everything away because of dislike for some or all aspects of feminist ideology.

DANIEL C. SMOLENS
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

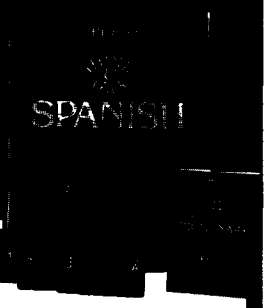
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am writing to congratulate you on two fine pieces in the February issue. Naomi Munson's "Harassment Blues" was excellent reading, as was Charlotte Allen's review of *Backlash*, the best-seller by Susan Faludi. So far, COMMENTARY and *Forbes* are the only publications that have ventured to take the politically-incorrect position that *Backlash* is not quite the brilliantly reported and scholarly work that many reviewers have said it is.

Bravo on two splendid articles.

GRETCHEN C. MORGENSON
Forbes
New York City

"They couldn't believe an American actually spoke their language."



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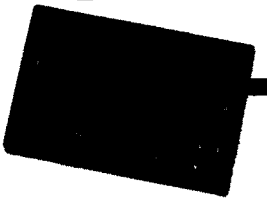

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NAOMI MUNSON writes:

As a matter of fact, I would consider an anti-Semitic remark to be an act of anti-Semitism. I would also consider it an expression of evil. That Daniel C. Smolens views lewdness in the same light seems to me to be his problem rather than mine.

I will not argue with Mr. Smolens the merits of Anita Hill's case, since, as I made clear in my article, I consider her case to have no merit. It should be noted, however, if we are calling spades spades, that Hill is not a girl without choices; her most recent choice, in fact, propelled her from her third-rate teaching job at a third-rate law school straight onto the feminist lecture circuit. Yes, Mr. Smolens, I do dislike not only some but all aspects of feminist ideology.

Charlotte Smith's letter is a telling indictment of that ideology, and I thank her for it. I am grateful to her also for her kind words about me, as I am to Gretchen C. Morgenson.

G. B. Shaw & Music

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Terry Teachout's contention in his review of *Bernard Shaw*, by Michael Holroyd [Books in Review, February], that in musical matters Shaw "became uncomfortable whenever he strayed very far from the shallows" is a laughable put-down of a body of sparkling and penetrating criticism that unlike most journalism is worth reading a century after it was written. Shaw's prophetic insight is perhaps best shown in his insistence on the supreme greatness of Mozart; for better or worse, he was a pioneer in the transformation of Mozart the Victorian-era China-doll figure into today's cult idol.

ERWIN KLINGSBERG
Mountainside, New Jersey

TERRY TEACHOUT writes:

In fact, I very much admire Shaw the music critic, not least for having pioneered the modern view of Mozart. The fact remains, though, that Shaw seems to have been made uncomfortable by certain kinds of direct emotional statement, in music as in everything else. Brahms left him cold; he had little of interest to say about Schubert, Chopin, or Liszt; his writings on Verdi are intelligent but priggish. This does not lessen the significance of his music criticism, which I believe to be of permanent value, but it is certainly a reflection of the deeper emotional deficiencies that Michael Holroyd discusses in his biography.

PC at Stanford

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the February letters section, David Merkowitz of the National Council on Education, responding to Dinesh D'Souza's article, "PC So Far" [October 1991], claims that political correctness is not a serious problem on American campuses. The best way to answer this claim is with some raw facts. I will limit myself to Stanford University and environs.

As of January 1 of this year I took early retirement at Stanford after 32 years of service as a professor of French literature, specializing in poetry of the 19th century, particularly Mallarmé, on whom I have written nine books. I quit because students were avowedly boycotting my courses for political reasons (I am a moderate conservative and have expressed my views in the campus newspapers). A number of students, when pressed, admitted that they were avoiding my classes. A dramatic example was that of . . . a black graduate student who, when he first came to Stanford, was advised by solicitous whites, many of them feminists, not to take any courses with me. But since he had read things of mine and liked them, he took my courses anyway, and became a staunch supporter as well as a friend.

Although less outspoken than I am, many of my finest colleagues, some of them world-class authorities on their special subjects, have suffered similar fates—the great Cervantes scholar, for instance, who had to leave Stanford, along with some principled graduate students, because his department . . . had become massively politicized and anti-Iberic.

On October 30, 1991, the liberal San Francisco *Chronicle*, after a broad investigation in the Bay Area, concluded that free expression had been gravely set back on local campuses as "even liberal educators concede."

In the face of all this, as well as powerful arguments by commentators of the caliber of George Will, who regards our cultural future as seriously threatened by campus attitudes (which are far more pervasive and insidious than my specific examples allow), Mr. Merkowitz comes up with something like a "workers'-paradise" view. . . . He cites the across-the-board opinion of academic administrators that all is basically hunky-dory in this regard. He has not understood the nature of the truly pathological subversion of authentic, disinterested knowledge in our time. Unlike the great Sidney Hook (who was my closest friend here at Stanford and who watched the scene with mounting horror), he does not realize that a virus like this one destroys the immune system, gets right down into the apparatus with which we judge what we are seeing. The university administrators—what else?—have gone along step-by-step with the degradation of learning in the same way as those of Vichy France or any other totalitarian order. . . .

ROBERT GREER COHN
Stanford, California

Michael Milken

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Craig Roberts, reviewing James B. Stewart's *Den of Thieves* [Books in Review, March], comments that Michael Milken's vulnerability stemmed largely from the circumstance that Milken "had made huge amounts of money, for himself and others, by activities the ordinary person could not understand." I am certainly to be counted as such a person, and I cannot claim to have any clear understanding of how Milken carried on his business or to what degree an objective cognoscente (if such exists) would regard his methods as criminal. Mr. Roberts is undeniably a cognoscente, and maybe he is objective, too. His criticism of the Stewart account is the most plausible and most persuasive I have seen, and I am grateful to COMMENTARY for making it available.

All during the "affair Milken," I had the troubling impression that Michael Milken . . . had been tried and found guilty long before he and his accusers gathered in Judge Wood's courtroom. I am very sympathetic to Mr. Roberts's conclusion that the case ought to be reopened and the public made privy to the truth.

[RABBI] URI D. HERSCHER
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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on publishing economist Paul Craig Roberts's review of *Den of Thieves* by James B. Stewart. I know Michael Milken well, having worked closely with him for a number of years at Drexel Burnham Lambert, where I ran the syndication desk. (I was also one of the committee of five that ran the High Yield Bond Department after Milken's forced departure.) This is the first review I have seen that dares to question the entire premise on which Stewart's book is based. . . .

When the public considers the facts Mr. Roberts presents in his review, particularly the counts to which Milken *actually* pled guilty, they have to wonder just how the Michael Milken/Junk Bond Market "story" managed to pick up so much steam that it became the cliché that ate the economy. . . .

Like Kafka's Joseph K., Milken seems to have fallen into a vortex where powerful cabals, who never accuse or face him directly, seem bent on obliterating him, as if his life and work have been worth nothing—as if he had never even existed. For instance, how is it that Milken continues to be labeled an "inside trader," when, as Mr. Roberts points out, he was never convicted of this charge, or any other charge remotely related to it? And where do "reporters" like Stewart get their "facts," when they refuse to speak to crucial witnesses and insiders, like myself, who could easily have corroborated or denied his omniscient anecdotes?

Obviously such lapses meant nothing to Stewart, who felt free to describe many of us in his book by name and to place us in scenes that we, better than anyone, know to be merely figments of his own overripe imagination. . . .

Then there was Stewart's steady stream of stories in the *Wall Street Journal* prior to the publication of his book. For obvious reasons, Stewart gave that paper's readers absolutely no information on the high-yield market's actual performance, which has been profitable for years. It provided investors—including savings and loan (S & L) institutions—with average returns of 14.1 percent from 1981 through 1991. Nor did he bother to tell readers that the high-yield market outperformed both ten-year Treasury bonds and the Dow Jones Industrial Average during that same period. And it was not in his best interest to reveal that companies financed by "junk" bonds created 17 million new jobs during the 1980's, while the Fortune 500 eliminated 3.65 million jobs. Why spoil a great story?

My phone has been ringing off the hook ever since this nightmarish scenario began unfolding, with calls from scores of people in the industry who know that the public has been fed a string of lies where Milken is concerned. But these people . . . are too terrorized by the Milken witchhunt to stand up publicly and speak the truth.

Can we really expect them to stand up and be counted when Milken pulled a ten-year sentence for technical violations of securities laws—violations that are not dissimilar to the infractions of 150 banks and securities firms, whom the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) opted to punish last December with fines and agreements to "cease and desist"? What we are all witnessing is a kind of financial McCarthyism, and people in the industry are scared to death at the idea of coming forward.

And then there are the government agencies, with so much explaining to do of their own, which have suddenly turned into carping Torquemadas, acting as if Michael Milken and/or junk bonds are somehow responsible for the S & L mess, and even the recession.

Consider, for example, the floundering Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which has apparently been asleep at the switch for years, allowing rafts of ill-conceived real-estate and third-world loans to drain its reserves. And consider, too, the FDIC's dogpaddling offspring, the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC), which has turned the S & L "bailout" into a fiasco of mismanagement and waste, for which no one, to date, has been held accountable. Where are the three-inch headlines on these scandals?

And why does the press roll over and play dead as both of these agencies continue to whine about high-yield bonds? According to the U.S. Senate, most of our nation's thrifts were insolvent in 1985-86. This was *before* almost any of them had invested in the high-yield market. What is more, according to the General Accounting Office (GAO), only 5 percent of the nation's thrifts held high-yield securities, which represented only 1.2 percent of their total assets. So,

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what sort of twisted wisdom is at work when the country quietly allows the FDIC and RTC to become self-appointed inquisitors of Michael Milken?

Like Paul Craig Roberts, I am someone who has a natural aversion to conspiracy theories. They tend to be seductive and too easily crafted from whole cloth. But where Michael Milken is concerned, I cannot help wondering. From my perspective, he was first branded guilty and then never given a fair chance to prove his own innocence. And for the most part, judging from their actions, the press and broadcast media could not have cared less.

I can only hope that Mr. Roberts's review will stimulate others to begin asking more questions about the Michael Milken case. . . .

LORRAINE SPURGE
Knowledge Exchange, Inc.
Beverly Hills, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thank you for publishing Paul Craig Roberts's wonderful review of James B. Stewart's *Den of Thieves*. The review exposes the book for what it is—a pack of lies. Stewart not only offers an inaccurate portrayal of Michael Milken's professional life, but of his personal life as well. I should know, for I was one of Milken's executive assistants.

Stewart tries to portray Milken as a cold and uncaring individual, but that could not be further from the truth. He is one of the warmest and most sensitive people I have ever met. I cannot count the times when Milken, upon discovering that someone was ill, would drop everything . . . and offer his assistance. . . . When one of Drexel's employees contracted leukemia and required a blood transfusion, for example, he arranged for a Red Cross blood drive at our office to find other employees with the same rare blood type.

If space permitted, I could offer a list of endless examples of incidents I personally witnessed of this kind, instances which are also documented in the 400 letters that were sent to Judge Kimba Wood on Milken's behalf at the time of the trial. These letters are available to anyone who cares to have a look at them.

Stewart never even attempted to find out about Milken's true character. He wrote as though he actually knew Milken, . . . though he never even met him. In a writer, this is not just pathetically unprofessional, it is also—and this is far worse—unethical.

JANET K. CHUNG
Santa Monica, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Craig Roberts's fine review of *Den of Thieves* notes that SEC officials knew the Fortune 500 would not come to Michael Milken's defense. This is an understatement. Most Fortune 500 types were delighted with the government's attack on Milken: he represented an important source of financing for hostile takeovers, and the criminalizing of such activity has long been a high-priority objective of their lobbyists.

The Williams Act, which requires disclosure of stock accumulations, is a legal roadblock that Stewart says "protects shareholders from coercive takeover tactics." The phrasing betrays his pro-management bias. It is not shareholders who are protected, it is entrenched managers who are protected from shareholders. Shareholders have been the chief beneficiaries of takeover activity, which has, directly and indirectly, accounted for much of the huge increase in stock values since 1982 that added trillions of dollars to the net worth of investors and pensioned retirees.

Another bias displayed by Stewart is political. He blames the takeover boom on Reagan's "lax" antitrust enforcement. This is nonsense. Most of the takeovers did not pose antitrust problems. Many, in fact, were criticized for breaking up diversified companies and spinning off their parts. . . .

Stewart has been accused of yet another bias: anti-Semitism. His book contains no smoking gun to substantiate this charge, but it does offer grounds for concern. He cannot help it if all four of his chief culprits are Jews, but he does dwell on it a lot. He tells us that at some firms "hostile takeovers bore an unsavory taint. They generated bad feelings, especially toward those who represented the attackers. This sometimes alienated other clients. Many . . . preferred to leave such work to other firms, many of them Jewish." Stewart may not necessarily be expressing his own feelings here, but everything he says in the rest of the book reflects a similar distaste for hostile takeovers, if not for Jews. The reader is left to wonder why Jews are so prominent in activities that bear an "unsavory taint." He seems to suggest that they are unusually greedy and dishonest, devoid of a "sense of justice and fair play."

Then there is the title of the book. Mr. Roberts notes that it is derived from the passage in the New Testament where Jesus cleanses the Temple of the moneychangers. The moneychangers were Jewish, but then so was everyone in Jerusalem at that time, including Jesus. Nothing incriminating there. Yet in modern times that passage has often been used by demagogues in an anti-Semitic context. Stewart is too young to remember Father Charles Coughlin, the anti-Semitic priest of the 1930's, whose weekly radio sermons were broadcast nationally from the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan. Coughlin regularly cited this particular passage. It was his favorite biblical text. Drive the moneychangers from the Temple, he cried, and the ones he identified were invariably Jewish, at a time when most U.S. leaders of banking and finance were not Jewish. Perhaps if Stewart had heard those tirades he would have chosen another title for his book.

VICTOR F. MORRIS
Teaneck, New Jersey

Correction

In the exchange between David Horowitz and Judge Hugh W. Silverman [Letters from Readers, April], a parenthetical phrase was inadvertently deleted from Judge Silverman's letter, which left him vulnerable to Mr. Horowitz's response that he "has difficulty reading texts." We regret the error.—ED.

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The Patriot Smear & Its Progeny

David Bar-Illan

ISRAEL WATCH, *the department we introduce here, is meant to deal with a new situation: the escalation of the ideological and political war against Israel which has been going on since, roughly, the end of the Gulf War. Every day, it seems, brings another lie about Israel, or another slander, or another tendentious misrepresentation; and every day, it also seems, there are fewer and fewer voices raised to expose the lie, to refute the slander, to correct the misrepresentation. No wonder, then, that Israel is perhaps more isolated politically than ever before in its history.*

Obviously, we cannot expect through this department alone to set the record straight in every detail. But we do hope to keep track of and to answer the main charges which enemies of Israel—and some of its self-proclaimed "friends"—have been hurling at it with relentless ferocity.

ISRAEL WATCH *will be written by a rotating team, led off by* DAVID BAR-ILLAN, *the editorial-page editor of the Jerusalem* Post, *and it will appear frequently in the months ahead.*

ORCHESTRATED smears are but one of many weapons commonly used by Israel's enemies in Washington. Such enemies have been populating U.S. government offices since the establishment of the state, and it is safe to assume that they will be there for some time to come, leaking anti-Israel canards whenever it seems propitious. But what has transformed them from irksome nuisances to major menaces is the hostile atmosphere which has been created by the Bush White House. A mood of open season on Israel makes them bolder, and encourages the media to gobble up their stories indiscriminately, no matter how ludicrous and fantastic these stories may be. In the context of a villainous Israel, anything goes, and dirty tricks of the kind employed only in total war against an implacable enemy become legitimate weapons in a contest of wills with an ally.

THE smears can be divided into roughly three categories. One is the accusation by anachronism, in which Israel is charged with selling weapons to a currently unpopular or blacklisted government when the weapons were in fact only sold, and perfectly legitimately, in the past.

This is particularly true with regard to South Africa, to which Israel sold arms at a time when that country was deemed an essential pillar of the free world's defense against the Soviet Union and was a favored customer of Western arms manufacturers. Most of the charges surfaced as South Africa's apartheid policies were becoming increasingly odious, and especially after the imposition of world sanctions against Pretoria, to which Israel strictly adhered. The media, which anyway relished making comparisons between Israel and the apartheid regime, would repeatedly dredge up old news of Israeli arms transactions, most often from the early 1970's, and present it as new. (That the Arab OPEC countries kept South Africa going in defiance of the sanctions, by providing it with 70 percent of its oil needs, was never mentioned.)

The second category—charges about specific weapons systems—is of a more recent vintage. Such charges, which usually include intimidating technological details, radiate accuracy and authenticity; but they are also more easily refutable. Thus, in one of the more egregious examples of this kind of fabrication, a syndicated column by Evans and Novak accused Israel of selling Patriot missile technology to China. To give their story greater credibility, the columnists actually named the missile, the "Have Nap," whose technology the Israelis were supposed to have betrayed.

As Dov Zakheim, a former Pentagon official, charitably put it:

> Someone exploited Evans and Novak's total ignorance about missiles to sell them this nonsense. That "Have Nap" is the American name for the Popeye, a missile developed and built by the Israeli military industry in Israel, is known to all casual readers of official American publications.

Israel, of course, needs no permission to sell an Israeli product like the Popeye. But as it happens, no such sale has ever even been discussed with China.

In his column in the New York *Times*, A.M. Rosenthal had no trouble pulverizing the Evans and Novak accusation. Under his salvos they squirmed, twisted, and then compounded the original blunder

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with science-fiction double-talk about Stealth technology which a secret American operation had allegedly introduced into the missile. When, finally, an editorial in the Washington *Times* denounced "whoever is doing the leaking of spurious accusations," Evans and Novak in effect retreated from all their charges. In a disingenuous letter to the editor of the Washington *Times*, they were reduced to seeking refuge in the third type of smear, the most common and least refutable—the nonspecific charge of betrayal and malfeasance:

> Israel, the state so often proclaimed as our Mideast ally, is playing fast and loose with high-tech secrets given by us to them. No one disputes that this tragic misuse of American friendship has been going on for years between Israel and South Africa. But China? That is different by a formidable measure.

By accusing Israel of "tragic misuse of American friendship," Evans and Novak deliberately cater to the perception of Israel, now carefully nurtured by some elements in the administration, as an ungrateful, cunning, and deceitful country which bites the hand that feeds it.

Nor can they be unaware of the advantage in making accusations too general to be answered, or in which innocent fact is given sinister connotation. That Israel has weapons deals with the Chinese is, after all, no secret. And there are many in Israel, and also among its friends abroad, who oppose selling any arms to totalitarian regimes. But accommodating the needs of Israel's vital arms industry is one thing, and committing national suicide is quite another. To suggest that Israel would sell China—one of the Arab regimes' main arms suppliers—American technology which might promptly be sold to the Arabs, and that it would risk its strategic relationship with the U.S. in the bargain, is to credit Israel with a galloping death wish.

IF THERE is one common denominator to all these charges, it is that they are false. Not that there is any way to guarantee the integrity and honesty of every person involved in the manufacture and sales of arms, or to determine the originality of every component in highly sophisticated weapons systems. But, if anything, Israel is the victim, not the perpetrator, of technology transfers. Thus, *Israeli* innovations have been incorporated in American fighter planes which have then been sold to Saudi Arabia. This is a transfer of Israeli technology not just to any third country, but to one which is in a state of war with Israel. It constitutes a direct threat to its security.

As the Israeli Defense Minister, Moshe Arens, has pointed out, Israel's high-tech arms industries are among the most advanced in the world. Otherwise, the U.S. would not be farming out the development of the Arrow, an SDI project aimed at building an effective anti-missile system, to Israel's defense industries. (Unlike the Patriot, originally designed as an anti-aircraft missile, the Arrow will defend not only limited areas against an incoming missile but will destroy launched enemy missiles before they approach their target.) And though the Israeli contribution to Desert Storm has been underplayed by the American military, the fact is that Israeli pilotless planes, weapons systems, and electronic devices proved invaluable in that war.

Moreover, many of the Israeli weapons supposedly based on American systems were developed well before Israel had any access to those systems. The Python 3 air-to-air missile, for example, allegedly "a knock-off of an American design, the heat-seeking AIM-9L Sidewinder," as the New York *Times* put it, was deployed in combat in the Israeli air force before Israel ever received its first Sidewinder.

SEVERAL motives have been suggested for this latest onslaught on Israel's credibility, veracity, and integrity. Some Jewish leaders, who had criticized former New York Mayor Edward Koch for publicizing the obscene utterances against the Jews reportedly made by Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d, believed the administration was retaliating by besmirching Israel.

Other observers argued that the leaks were timed to deflect attention from the dismal failure of the U.S. navy to intercept the North Korean and Iranian ships carrying Scuds ultimately destined for Syria. These observers noted that the newest accusations were related to missile technology, whose proliferation in the Middle East the U.S. seems unable to stop. Accusing Israel of involvement in such proliferation would provide a convenient diversion.

Still others believed that since many of Israel's friends in Congress oppose the administration's closeness to China, charges of Israeli complicity with that country would embarrass them. Putting these Congressmen on the defensive could also soften their opposition to a proposed new arms sale to Saudi Arabia.

But it was probably erroneous to suppose that any of these things triggered the campaign. A *Wall Street Journal* story, which divulged a State Department report on alleged Israeli violations ignored by pro-Israel American bureaucrats, had been in preparation for a long time. This story affords a glimpse into one of the most likely forces behind the leaks: administration officials are quoted as threatening to lift the licenses of Israeli arms manufacturers now permitted both to receive American technology and to sell to the American military.

This is not only an implicit threat to cripple Israel's military industry unless the Shamir government becomes more "flexible." It also reflects a fear of Israeli competition in a shrinking arms market.

The trouble in which the American defense industries find themselves, and their readiness to resort to dirty tricks to eliminate the competition, should not be underestimated. The U.S. defense budget has been substantially cut; tens of thousands have been laid off; and some of the major military industries are on the verge of collapse. In seeking markets around the world, these industries often discover that Israeli products have preceded them. They have much to gain by preventing Israel from selling arms.

Yet none of these anti-Israel elements would have been as outrageous in their charges, nor would

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middle-echelon bureaucrats have dared leak unverified intelligence reports, had the Bush administration not created a fertile ground for such actions and at least tacitly sanctioned them.

Indeed, the mood had become so charged that even the more sober press threw all caution and decency to the winds. For example, before the American inspection team sent to Israel had had a chance to examine the Patriot missiles there—a task it performed not only with meticulous thoroughness but with the hauteur, detachment, and suspicion reserved for arrant natives of a banana republic—the New York *Times* was already impatiently preaching retribution. "Stern sanctions [on Israel] would send an appropriate message: fair punishment for all proliferators," the *Times* editorialized.

IRONICALLY, it is precisely the issue of arms proliferation which constitutes the most dismaying and dangerous aspect of this whole sorry saga. Not Israeli-initiated proliferation, however, but American. For with the demise of the Soviet empire, the U.S. has become by far the biggest supplier of weaponry to the Arab countries. The recently retired chief of the Israeli air force, Avihu Bin Nun, estimates that 75 percent of the advanced weaponry now deployed by the Arab armies is American. Efforts by Israel's friends in Congress to stop these sales—amounting to tens of billions of dollars—have been largely unsuccessful.

True, most of these weapons systems—some, as mentioned, containing crucial Israeli improvements—have been sold to the relatively moderate regimes in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. But the Arab armies exchange technological and tactical information. Iraq and Jordan do so to this day. The Saudis exchanged weapons and information with Iraq before the Gulf War, and still do with Syria. (The revelations to this effect in the Los Angeles *Times* last April only confirmed what Israelis have known for a long time.)

This massive proliferation of state-of-the-art hardware and knowledge has enabled the Arab armies to leap forward by several technological generations. Israel is thereby being presented with what Bin Nun calls "an intolerable situation": the loss of its qualitative superiority to the Arab armies surrounding it.

Israel is still defined as a non-NATO ally, and even the Bush administration repeats the "we'll preserve Israel's qualitative superiority" mantra, but in fact the U.S. no longer shares its most advanced technologies with Israel. In the prevailing anti-Israel mood, the executive branch routinely sabotages deliveries approved by Congress and the relevant bureaucracies. Parts and weapons are habitually held up, and the $700-million worth of surplus equipment pledged during the Gulf War has never been delivered. Nor has the administration kept most of the other promises of strategic investments in Israel it made during that war.

THE danger to Israel in all this is clear enough. For one thing, having abandoned the production of its own fighter plane, the Lavi, Israel is dependent on the U.S. for the backbone of its air force—its first line of defense—as well as for other fundamental components of its defense posture.

But the even greater danger in the administration's policy lies in the impression it imparts to the Arab regimes. These Arab regimes (and Iran) have been deterred from attacking Israel at least partly because of their certainty that the U.S. would come to its rescue—not with troops, but with arms and political clout. With the disappearance of such certainty, the temptation to view Israel as eminently vulnerable may become well-nigh irresistible.

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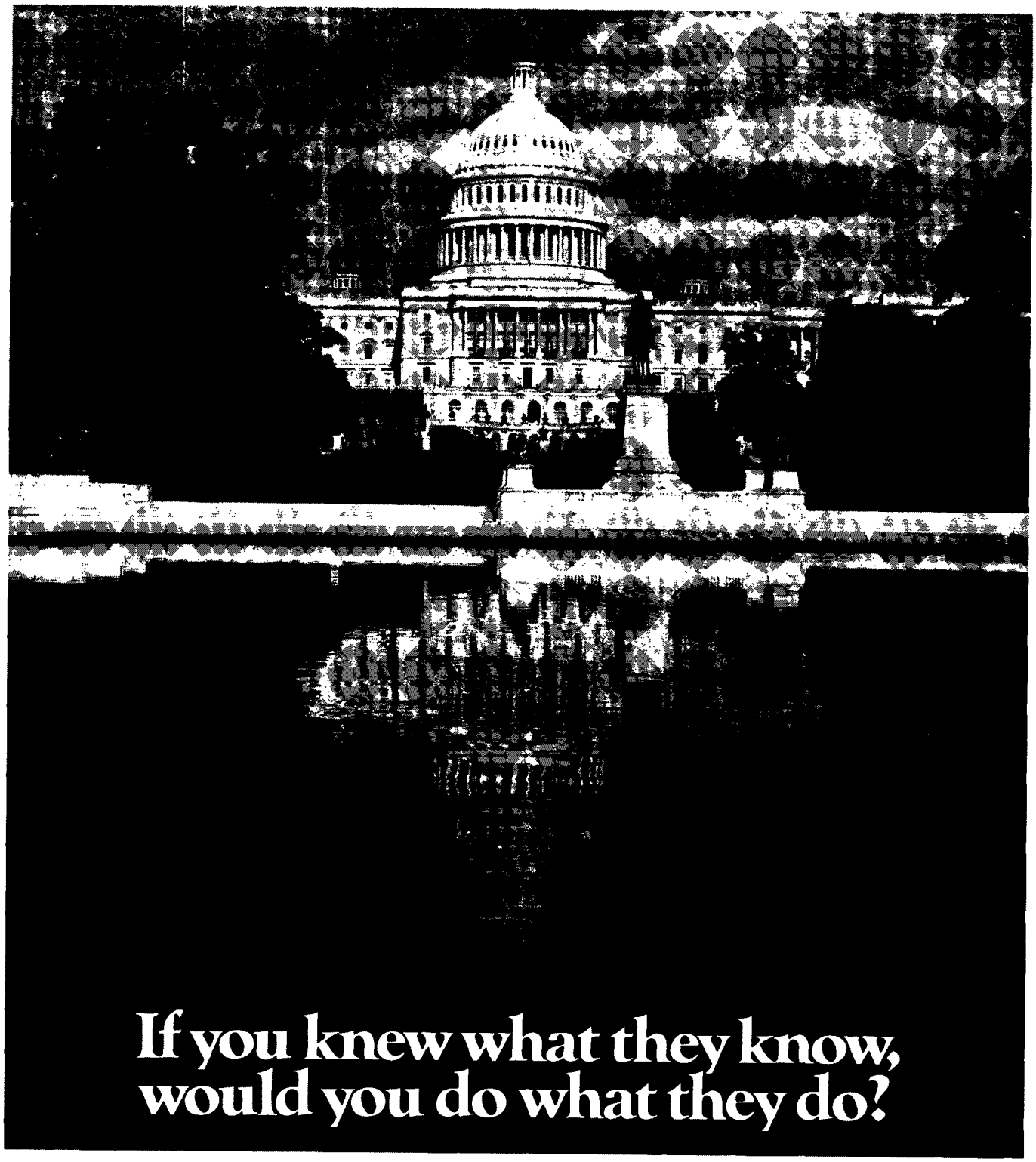

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The New Anti-Catholicism

George Weigel

OVER the past several years, evidence has been mounting that new forms of an old bigotry, anti-Catholicism, are befouling American public life. Consider these incidents, listed in chronological order:

• In 1989, the National Endowment for the Arts funded an exhibition of paintings about AIDS. The catalogue for the show described Cardinal John O'Connor of New York as a "fat cannibal" and a "creep in black skirts," and referred to St. Patrick's Cathedral as "that house of walking swastikas on Fifth Avenue." The New York *Times*, commenting on the subsequent controversy, referred to these characterizations as matters of "critical opinion."

• Later that same year, the editors of the *Times* thought it appropriate to warn the Catholic bishops of the United States that a too-vigorous exercise of their teaching office might destroy the "truce of tolerance" that has permitted Catholics to operate in this country at the sufferance of its non-Catholic majority:

> To force religious discipline on public officials risks destroying the fragile accommodations that Americans of all faiths and no faith have built with the bricks of the Constitution and the mortar of tolerance.

• In February 1990, agitated by statements by Cardinal O'Connor and New York auxiliary bishop Austin Vaughan critical of Governor Mario Cuomo's record on abortion, the well-known historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. informed readers of the *Times*'s op-ed page that O'Connor and Vaughan were

> doing their best to verify the fears long cherished by the No-Nothings [*sic*] in the 1850's, the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920's, and a succession of anti-Catholic demagogues that the Roman Catholic Church would try to overrule the American democratic process.

• In July 1990, David R. Boldt, editorial-page director at the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, wrote in an op-ed piece that the bishops risked "reawakening all the old religious prejudices and fears that once inflamed American politics" by "*giving them substance.*" Boldt continued:

> The Roman Catholic Church, it needs to be remembered, is quite literally an *un-American* institution. It is not democratic. The Church's views on due process and on the status of women, to name just a couple of key issues, are sharply at odds with those that inform the laws of American secular society. And its principal policies are established by the Vatican in Rome [emphases in original].

• Commenting on Judge Clarence Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court in early July 1991, Governor L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia worried that the nominee "has indicated that he is a very devout Catholic. . . . How much allegiance is there to the Pope?" During the ensuing controversy, a Washington *Post* columnist, Judy Mann, opined that "Clarence Thomas makes much of his education at the hands of Catholic nuns, and much should be made of it during his Supreme Court confirmation hearing." Another columnist, Ellen Goodman, was similarly distressed, and similarly defensive: "It isn't liberals, and it certainly isn't Douglas Wilder who have reopened the can of worms marked religion. It's the Catholic hierarchy."

• In September 1991, several public-television stations, including New York's WNET and KCET in Los Angeles, broadcast "Stop the Church," a film celebrating the attack in December 1989 on a Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral by members of Act-Up (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). During the "demonstration" in the cathedral, Act-Up members drowned out Cardinal O'Connor's sermon with screams of "bigot" and "murderer"; and at least one activist desecrated the Eucharist by taking the communion wafer and spitting it on the floor. This was of a pattern with previous Act-Up "demonstrations," including the disruption of an ordination in Boston, which the Boston *Globe* styled "colorful, loud, and peaceful." John Leo of *U.S. News & World Report* had a different view of the Boston event:

> [*Globe*] Readers were not told of the parody of the communion rite featuring condoms as hosts, the mocking of Jesus' Sermon on the

GEORGE WEIGEL is president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. His eighth book, *The Final Revolution: The Resistance Church and the Collapse of Communism*, will be published by Oxford University Press in the fall.

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> Mount as an endorsement of sodomy, the simulated anal and oral sex, [and] the level of harassment outside the church. Some of the Act-Up angries swarmed around one newly ordained priest and his elderly mother, pelting them with condoms until police intervened and escorted them away.

• On October 18, 1991, the hosts of the *Steve Dahl and Garry Meier Show* on radio station WLUP-AM in Chicago suggested an alternative to the eucharistic bread offered at a Catholic Mass: the Church might "cut up a sausage" for a "spicy Body of Christ" and offer "Cajun Jesus—blackened, blackened Body of Christ."

• On November 14, 1991, the news conference marking the end of the annual Washington meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) was the target of another homosexual "demonstration." Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati, the chairman of the NCCB, was trying to brief some 100 journalists when two activists came up the aisle of the meeting room, unfurled an Act-Up banner in front of the dais, and began tossing packets of condoms at the archbishop. The demonstrators shouted slogans alleging that the Church caused AIDS and that most priests were gay, and batted inflated condoms back and forth like beach balls. Many journalists were reportedly angry at the demonstrators, but news of their disruption of the proceedings did not make it into the prestige dailies.

• During the recent debate over school-choice legislation in Pennsylvania, Jack Grier, the teachers' union president in Easton, Pennsylvania, told the local school board that

> The enemy to public education in the state of Pennsylvania is the Catholic Church. If the Catholic Church were to cease to exist and disappear today, it would be better for all of us.

An ad taken out in the St. Mary's (Pa.) *Daily News* by a group of public-school parents said that non-public (i.e., Catholic) schools offer "only courses in prejudice and basket-weaving."

• On January 21, 1992, the homosexual group Queer Nation staged a demonstration at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, during an evening prayer service prior to the annual March for Life in the nation's capital; Cardinal O'Connor preached at the service. The demonstration featured a scantily clad lesbian "crucified" on a mock cross, to which was affixed a sign that read, "Christ Loves Women and Queers/Why Does O'Connor Hate Us?" During the service, demonstrators outside the shrine chanted, "We're here, we're queer, and we want your children." The next day's rally was also marred by verbal attacks on the marchers by homosexual and pro-choice activists, and by offensive anti-Catholic pro-choice placards ("Get your rosaries off my ovaries," etc.).

The list could be multiplied, if not *ad infinitum*, then at least *ad nauseam*. For this catalogue of public (and, in some sense, "political") outrages does not begin to touch the depressingly ubiquitous mockery of Catholic teachings and images in the popular culture, which runs the gamut from Madonna's costumes through Broadway shows like *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*. But perhaps the point has been made. Had virtually any other religious institution been subjected to such scurrilities over the past few years, cries of (wholly justifiable) protest would have rung out from sea to shining sea. But there has been no such protest over the new anti-Catholicism. On the contrary: by giving ample space and time to anti-Catholic agitprop on the airwaves and in the editorial and op-ed pages, and by the pervasive use of euphemisms such as those employed by the New York *Times* and the Boston *Globe* in reporting Act-Up stories, the prestige press has become very much part of the problem.

Why these things have happened, and why they have been covered (or covered-up) the way they have, tells us something, not only about contemporary anti-Catholicism in America, but about the *Kulturkampf*, the "culture war," that increasingly defines the basic fault-line in our public life.

II

THERE is, of course, nothing new about anti-Catholicism in the United States. The Harvard historian, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., once told Father John Tracy Ellis, the dean of American Catholic historians: "I regard the prejudice against your Church as the deepest bias in the history of the American people." Be that as it may, anti-Catholicism has a long pedigree in American culture; nor can anti-Catholicism be regarded simply as a matter of ravings from the fever swamps. In fact, from its earliest (which is to say, Protestant, and specifically Puritan) beginnings, anti-Catholicism in America has frequently been rather tony, even well-bred.

The 1688 *New England Primer*, for example, taught the heirs of John Winthrop ("Wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill . . .") to sing, "Abhor that arrant Whore of Rome, And all her blasphemies; And drink not of her cursed cup, Obey not her decrees." Three generations later the tone quality had improved but the substance remained; and so John Adams would write to his wife Abigail about his explorations of Catholic Philadelphia during the 1774 Continental Congress in these terms:

> This afternoon, led by curiosity and good company, I strolled away to mother church, or rather grandmother church. I mean the Romish chapel. . . . [The] entertainment was to me most awful and affecting: the poor wretches fingering their beads, chanting Latin,

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not a word of which they understood; their pater nosters and ave Marias; their holy water; their crossing themselves perpetually; their bowing to the name of Jesus, whenever they hear it; their bowings, kneelings, and genuflections before the altar. The dress of the priest was rich white lace. His pulpit was velvet and gold. The altar piece was very rich, little images and crucifixes about; wax candles lighted up. . . .

Here is everything which can lay hold of the eye, ear, and imagination—everything which can charm and bewitch the simple and ignorant. I wonder how Luther ever broke the spell.

To be sure, the higher ecclesiastical put-down was not universal among the Founders. The newly inaugurated President George Washington wrote in rather different terms to the leaders of the small American Catholic community in March 1790:

As mankind become more liberal, they will be more apt to allow, that all those who conduct themselves as worthy members of the community are entitled to the equal protection of civil government. I hope ever to see America among the foremost nations in examples of justice and liberality. And I presume that your fellow-citizens will not forget the patriotic part which you took in the accomplishment of their Revolution, and the establishment of their government; or the important assistance which they received from a nation in which the Roman Catholic religion is professed. . . . May the members of your Society in America, animated alone by the pure spirit of Christianity, and still conducting themselves as the faithful subjects of our free government, enjoy every temporal and spiritual felicity.

President Washington's tolerant sentiments did not prevail, however, and the beginnings of mass Irish immigration in the 1820's and 1830's became the occasion for a widespread outburst of nativist anti-Catholicism throughout the country. This was abetted by the founding, in 1830, of an openly anti-Catholic weekly newspaper, the *Protestant*, and by the establishment, in 1842, of the American Protestant Association, whose constitution declared that Catholicism was "subversive of civil and religious liberty." In the 1830's, too, Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal*—a lurid fiction pretending to detail the steamy goings-on in a French-Canadian convent—enjoyed a brisk nationwide sale (and set a pattern for peekaboo attacks on the Church's sexual ethic and the celibacy of priests and nuns that persists to this day).

Nor was violence against Catholic institutions unheard of in those days, the most notorious incidents being the burning of an Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in 1834 (the mob having been incited by an eminently respectable minister, the Reverend Lyman Beecher) and the three-day-long Philadelphia riots of May 1844, in which two Catholic churches were burned, thirteen people killed, and scores wounded.

Catholic bishops responded as their temperaments dictated. Philadelphia's Francis Kenrick, a mild-mannered scholar, left his city for several days in order to help calm matters. New York's "Dagger John" Hughes took a different approach. When local nativists threatened to replicate the Philadelphia burnings, Bishop Hughes stationed armed guards around Catholic properties and announced that, were their churches fired, the Catholics would turn New York into a "second Moscow." The churches were left untouched.

THE nativist fever waxed and waned in antebellum America, and while anti-Catholic mobs could readily be incited when economic hardship intersected with the availability of cheap immigrant labor to make for a volatile social cocktail, these *lumpen*-agitations were frequently influenced by men of position. Thus one of the most famous nativist tracts of that time, *Foreign Conspiracies Against the Liberty of the United States*, was written by the inventor of the telegraph, Samuel F.B. Morse. The reading of this tome would later lead Mark Twain to confess that "I have been educated to enmity toward everything that is Catholic. . . ."

Antebellum nativism reached its peak with the emergence in 1854 of the Know-Nothing party, which ran candidates for Congress and the presidency on an explicitly anti-Catholic platform. (The Know-Nothings were also "anti-foreign," which in that historical context amounted to the same thing.) The detritus of this experiment in politically organized bigotry survived to help form the new Republican party, although the party's 1860 presidential nominee, Abraham Lincoln, rejected Know-Nothingism throughout his career.*

The cataclysm of the Civil War put the brakes on the worst of public anti-Catholicism for a brief period, but the nativist fever intensified again in the latter part of the 19th century. Three years after the mudslinging about "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion" had prevented James G. Blaine's election to the presidency, resurgent anti-Catholicism took its most important organized form in the American Protective Association (APA), founded in 1887 in Iowa. As Father Ellis put it:

* Asked by an old friend in 1855 to define himself politically, Lincoln replied that he thought he was a Whig, but was "certain" that he was not a Know-Nothing: "How could I be? . . . Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that 'all men are created equal.' We now practically read, 'all men are created equal, except negroes.' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read, 'all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and catholics.' When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocracy [*sic*]."

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> The customary quota of ex-priests, whether real or bogus, and the so-called "escaped nuns" appeared to tour the land, and the old and familiar charges of Know-Nothing days now enjoyed a second spring.

Prominent Protestants such as Theodore Roosevelt and the Reverend Washington Gladden condemned the APA, but, once again, the crude anti-Catholicism of the stump and the mob was abetted by other members of the nation's cultural elite. Accordingly, the eminent historian George Bancroft could write to a friend in 1868 about the "Roman clerical party" in these terms:

> No band of conspirators was ever more closely welded together. The one will of the Pope rules the creed, the politics, the conduct of all. The selfsame malign influence is at work in Spain, in France, . . . and in Austria. Nay it extends to England . . . and the United States.

As Father Ellis commented:

> If the American Minister to Berlin, and the man who was regarded by many as the greatest living historian of the United States, could honestly believe that the Pope ruled the politics and conduct of Catholics throughout the world, it was easy to see how the errant nonsense of the APA persuaded many.

CLASSIC American anti-Catholicism—in both its sweaty and cultured expressions—had both racial and religious foundations. The up-market version of the former was that Catholic immigrants were toxins in the national racial "stock"—a belief that frequently intersected with the economic dislocations of industrialization to produce parallel fevers in working-class people and farming communities. (The fourth wave of this eugenic apprehension eventually yielded the immigration quotas of the 1920's, which were mainly aimed at restricting the influx of Southern and Eastern Europeans, many of whom were, of course, Catholics.)

But the enduring quality of classic anti-Catholicism in America was due in large part to the demographics of American religion. It was a matter of faith for generations of American Protestants that the United States (heir to England's Glorious Revolution of 1688) was a Protestant country whose moral and political bedrock consisted of certain Reformation concepts of the right relationship between the individual and God, between the believer and the church, and between the church and the political process. For all practical purposes, "Americanism" and "Protestantism" were deemed moral synonyms.

This conviction assumed high cultural forms (as in Francis Parkman's books on the struggle for North America between the English and the French) and also issued in the more vulgar anti-Romanism of Morse and Maria Monk. But it is of more moment, in thinking through the distinctiveness of our current situation, to mark the fact that classic American Protestant anti-Catholicism in the 19th and early 20th centuries simply took it as self-evident that American democracy required a religious foundation: specifically, a Protestant religious foundation. Absent this, it was widely believed, there were but two possible outcomes to the American experiment: a revival of premodern despotism (linked to Rome), or moral anarchy leading, in short order, to political collapse.

In other words, for all that they were exercised by the possible malign influence of an ascendant "Romanism," neither Lyman Beecher, nor George Bancroft, nor the founders of the APA ever dreamed of advocating a secularist polity in which religion would be ruled out of the public debate—what Richard John Neuhaus would call, much later, "the naked public square."

III

YET this is precisely the turn anti-Catholicism took in the late 1940's and early 1950's, when it was transformed ideologically under the influence of the secularist Paul Blanshard. Indeed, Blanshard's best-selling diatribe, *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (1949), can be considered a kind of notional courtesy grandfather to the form of anti-Catholicism that is all too frequently encountered these days in the prestige press, the American academy, the feminist and homosexual lobbies, and the popular-entertainment industry.*

Blanshard, a former State Department official turned freelance publicist and activist in the causes of secular humanism and eugenics, believed that America had a "Catholic problem." The Church was an "undemocratic system of alien control," in which the laity were fettered by the "absolute rule of the clergy." To Blanshard, the Church's "system of global discipline" was so similar to the Kremlin's that (in his 1950 book, *Communism, Democracy, and Catholic Power*) he could discuss without blushing the parallels between the "structure of power," the "management of truth," the "thought control," and the "strategy of penetration" practiced by those "two alien and undemocratic" centers, Moscow and Rome. In the face of this Catholic monolith, "cooperation is not feasible"; the only thing that true patriots could do was to organize a "resistance movement" aimed at thwarting "the antidemocratic social policies of the hierarchy. . . ."

Blanshard's great Catholic antagonist was the Jesuit theologian, John Courtney Murray—the man whose defense of the American constitu-

* *American Freedom and Catholic Power* went through six printings between March and August 1949, and sold hundreds of thousands of copies during the 1950's. Interestingly enough, Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures* was also reissued in 1960.

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tional arrangement on matters of church and state helped clear the path for the Second Vatican Council's landmark "Declaration on Religious Freedom" in 1965. Murray found much in Blanshard's work that was familiar, including the master charge that Catholics had "never been assimilated" into American democracy. True, the "cold, cultured manner of its utterance" was new, and Blanshard had deplored "the religious bigotry of the old nativist attack." But this pretense to civility in fact indicated that the nativist cancer had metastasized in a new and even more virulent direction.

This time around, said Murray, the inspiration for anti-Catholicism was not "Protestant bigotry." Rather, it was a "secularist positivism that deplores bigotry at the same time as it achieves a closure of mind and an edge of antagonism that would be the envy" of the most fevered circuit-rider or Ku Kluxer. The argument, in that sense, was not really about Catholicism and American democracy. The larger strategic goal of Blanshard's polemic was to nail down the claim that "democracy is necessarily based on a naturalist or secularist philosophy."

In short, Murray argued that the threat posed by Blanshard's "new nativism" was not to Catholics alone: the new nativism was a threat to anyone who believed that democracy had something to do with a polity that held itself accountable to transcendent values. Blanshard's secularist/naturalist concept of freedom, Murray wrote, would proscribe anyone from seeking "to introduce, or . . . to make operative, in public life an absolute standard of morality." Those who made such an effort were, by definition, "anti-democratic."

THE fact that Blanshard had defined the ideological contours of the new anti-Catholicism in terms that portended a much larger argument about the moral foundations of American democracy was obscured for a time by the politics of the 1960 presidential campaign. John F. Kennedy, a Catholic, ran for the White House while looking nervously over his shoulder at the ghost of Al Smith, whose drubbing by Herbert Hoover in 1928 was due in part to a hysterical wave of anti-Catholicism in the once-Solid South.* Kennedy thought he had put the "religion issue" behind him by winning an early primary in overwhelmingly Protestant West Virginia. But when he continued to be dunned on the question of his Catholicism after securing the nomination (and by such high-visibility Protestant leaders as Norman Vincent Peale), Kennedy decided to tackle the matter head-on, and scheduled an appearance on September 12, 1960, before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association.

Kennedy's tactical aim was to neutralize the potential antagonism to his candidacy that he sensed among Protestants, particularly evangelicals; and in that respect the Houston speech was a success. But the cost of his tactical victory was a massive concession to Blanshard's secularism on the strategic level. For Kennedy's answer to nativisms old and new was to affirm his belief in

> an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Jewish—where no public official either requests or accepts instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches, or any other ecclesiastical source—where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials.

Clause by clause, this famous section of the Houston speech involved three moves in a rapid retreat from what had once been taken for granted about religion's public role in American life. The first third of Kennedy's proposition was, and is, unobjectionable: the First Amendment clearly prohibits a national ecclesiastical establishment. The second clause, however, is odd: if a religious institution or leader has wisdom to offer on matters of public policy, why should he, she, or it be constitutionally disbarred from offering it to public officials? But it was the third part of the proposition that raised Kennedy's argument from the objectionable to the dangerous. In Kennedy's extreme parsing of the Framers' intentions, reli-

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* Writing in the Baltimore *Sun* on August 6, 1928, H.L. Mencken confessed that, "with the nomination of Al in the hot, hell-bent city of Houston, I resumed an old vice: the reading of denominational papers. . . . As of July 10 I subscribed to all the Baptist and Methodist organs south of the Potomac . . . and [from] them I learn a great deal that is confidential and surprising about the plot of the Pope to seize the United States."

Thus the Richmond *Christian Advocate* hinted that Douglas Southall Freeman, editor of the Richmond *News-Leader*, was "now owned and controlled by Catholic and Jewish interests," because he had failed to join the anti-Al Smith crusade. And the terms of that crusade were not genteel. Writing in the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate* of Atlanta, the Reverend A.M. Pierce claimed to be "strongly persuaded" that Catholicism was but a "degenerate type of Christianity" which had to be replaced by a "purer type." Dr. A.T. Robertson of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, limning "The Romish Peril" in the *Baptist Courier* of Greenville, South Carolina, warned that "the Pope undoubtedly longs for the wealth and power of the United States to be in his hands. . . . He will never give up that hope. He will leave no stone unturned to gain that end. . . . Rome means to get control of the United States sooner or later. Protestants may well understand that purpose."

But Dr. Robertson was mild-mannered compared to Elder W.C. Benson, writing in the Arkansas *Baptist and Commoner*: "To vote for Al Smith would be granting the Pope the right to dictate to this government what it should do. A vote for Al Smith would be the sacrificing of our public schools. Rome says to hell with our public schools. A vote for Al Smith would be to say that all Protestants are living in adultery because they were not married by a priest. To vote for Al Smith is to say our offspring are bastards. Are you ready to accept this?"

These hyperventilations produced some mordant humor among Catholics, as such things often do. A joke quickly began circulating soon after Smith's defeat: "Did you hear about Al Smith's telegram to the Pope on November 7? It was only one word long—'Unpack.'"

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gious institutions were not only to avoid any "direct" role in the public-policy process; they were to avoid any "indirect" role, too.

Kennedy had thus met the attack of the Protestant nativists by adopting (probably unwittingly) the theory of the *secular* nativists: that moral arguments whose roots were to be found in religious convictions had no business in American public life.

AS THINGS actually turned out, Kennedy's Houston speech contributed far more to Blanshard's secularizing campaign than it did to the cause of religious tolerance in America. The United States did become more religiously tolerant in the 1960's, and while Kennedy's presidency may well have had something to do with this development, other and more powerful forces were also at work. The pontificate of Pope John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council, the vigorous entry of American Catholics into the ecumenical movement, and the increasing fissiparousness of theological liberalism—all these combined to take much of the edge off traditional mainline Protestant anti-Catholicism.

Then, a decade later, in the 1970's, bridges began to be built across the other gulf in the old Catholic-Protestant divide—the one between Catholics and evangelical Protestants. For these former antagonists now found themselves in political common cause in the right-to-life movement that emerged after the Supreme Court's abortion decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*, and in response to Carter-administration efforts to exert greater governmental control over independent religious schools. Indeed, by the early 1980's, it was arguable that the old anti-Catholic nativism, of either the mainline/oldline or evangelical-Protestant varieties, was largely a thing of the past. The electoral numbers certainly suggested that such was the case: Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants were key elements of the Reagan coalition.

But if the old religiously based nativism was dead or dying, the new secularist nativism had taken a new lease on life, and was busily advancing Blanshard's larger agenda while continuing his attack on the dangers Catholicism posed to American democracy. This newer anti-Catholicism was activated by a number of forces: the (decidedly profane) counterculture of the 1960's; the trend toward a fashionable philosophical skepticism in the American academy (including American seminaries); and the anti-establishmentarianism of the popular-entertainment industry. And the same forces also forged new beachheads for the secularist cause in American culture and politics: particularly in terms of the sexual revolution which, predictably enough, became the centerpiece of the secularists' agenda (and of the secularists' attack on Catholicism).

But the newer nativism got an additional boost from an unexpected source. Its animadversions now began intersecting with new forms of dissent in American Catholicism itself to help promote a vulgarized picture of the Catholic Church as inherently authoritarian, oppressive, and dogmatic—in a word, "undemocratic."

To anyone familiar with the history of anti-Catholicism in America, the new *Catholic* Catholic-bashing was truly bizarre. No longer was it Paul Blanshard who worried about the alleged affinities between the Kremlin and the Vatican; now it was the former chairman of the theology department at the University of Notre Dame and past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, Father Richard McBrien, who compared Pope John Paul II, unfavorably, with Mikhail Gorbachev. The feminist leader Gloria Steinem (child of a Protestant mother and a Jewish father) could lay down the cudgels she had once taken up against the alleged "anti-woman" ideologues among the Catholic bishops; that job was now being regularly performed on the op-ed page of the New York *Times* by a Catholic feminist, Anna Quindlen. And with Catholics like Senator Edward Kennedy leading the charge against school choice and House Speaker Thomas Foley, also a Catholic, assuring the nation that the Congress would statutorily save *Roe* v. *Wade*, it was no longer necessary for the correspondents of small-circulation Baptist newspapers in the farther reaches of the Old South to warn against the threats to American democracy posed by "Romanism." Indeed, the grandsons of Mencken's "political parsons" were now more likely to be found shoulder-to-shoulder with the papal "foreign potentate" and his more assertive American bishops on these questions.

IV

THE new anti-Catholicism is best understood, then, not as a secularized form of the old Protestant disdain for "Romishness," but as a crucial component in a more radical and comprehensive campaign to establish secularism—the naked public square—as the official doctrine of the United States. Nor is the secularism in question the public expression of a benign and tolerant deism. The new secularism (with its attendant new nativism) has set its face resolutely against any notion of transcendence, and particularly a religiously informed transcendence. If the columnist Ellen Goodman may be taken as representative of this *sensibilité*, her reference to religion as a "can of worms" reveals, not a concern for the maintenance of democratic civility amid social and religious pluralism, but the secularizers' contempt for religious conviction as something inherently repressive and authoritarian.

The claim of the new secularists, like that of the old nativists, is that Catholicism is not safe for

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democracy: that Catholicism is inherently anti-pluralistic and that, if truth be told, the preferred Catholic arrangement would be something on the order of Franco's Spain. But this not only ignores the fact that the Church explicitly rejected the old altar-and-throne model at the Second Vatican Council. It also misses the crucial role that the Catholic Church has played in transitions to democracy in Spain, Portugal, and the Philippines, and throughout Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. (If Mikhail Gorbachev and *Time* can recognize this, surely Anna Quindlen and Governor Wilder can make the effort.) Moreover, the new anti-Catholicism conveniently represses the history of American Catholic patriotism, even as it skips lightly over the indisputable fact that there is no monolithic "Catholic voting bloc" in the United States today.

But there is more here than ignorance (or malice); there is also great irony. The charge, most often raised in terms of issues like abortion and "gay rights," is that the Catholic Church is seeking an unconstitutional establishment of religion or, in the current parlance, to "impose its values" on others. But it is those who make this charge who are actually guilty of it: it is they who are the new establishmentarians, the real anti-pluralists, the true social monists. For it is they who wish to level the crags and peaks of American conviction into a flat and monotone secularism, enforced by the coercive power of the state.

The new secularist attempt to impose this monism on American public life in the name of "liberalism" is yet another irony in the fire. For the new secularist nativism is profoundly illiberal. It seeks to dislodge the venerable Western conviction that society is prior to the state, and that the state exists to serve society rather than the other way around.

In the classic Western tradition of political philosophy, the independence of certain "prior" institutions (including religious institutions) was understood to be a crucial social barrier protecting the individual and society from the state's temptation to expand continuously the sphere of its power. In the brave new world of the new secularist nativism, however, there are no "self-evident truths," there is no transcendent moral horizon by which public policy can be critically analyzed, and the status of the traditional "prior institutions" is suspect. There is, at bottom, only power—and power in its basest form, the capacity to force others to acquiesce to one's will. Thus Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s worries in 1990 were precisely backward: as he may now recognize, thanks to his service on the New York state commission reviewing "multicultural" approaches to the teaching of history, the real threat to American pluralism is not Cardinal O'Connor, but the forces of political correctness, imposing their own radical deconstruction of reality through the public purse and public institutions.* One suspects that many parents whose public-school children are currently being indoctrinated into a state-approved sexual ethic (which may be charitably described as "libertine") have reached a similar conclusion.

THE Bismarckian term *Kulturkampf* is sometimes used these days to describe the "culture war" in American public life. The *Kulturkampf* can be defined along several axes of confrontation, but one way to think of it is as a struggle between those who affirm the classic Jewish and Christian notion of an objective moral order, and those who deny on epistemological grounds that there is any such thing as an "objective moral norm." The former conviction seems to be affirmed by the overwhelming majority of Americans; the latter is the regnant shibboleth in the high culture, and especially the American academy. In the former understanding, democracy is a substantive experiment, in which moral norms shape law and public policy through a complex intellectual and political mediation. In the latter understanding, democracy is simply an ensemble of procedures (increasingly, about litigation).

But democracy that is merely procedural will likely not remain democracy over the long haul. And that is what is at stake for the United States in the contest with the new anti-Catholicism. The new anti-Catholicism is a particularly nasty weapon in a broader *Kulturkampf* in which one party, determined to impose its secularism and moral relativism on public life through the use of state power, has clearly taken up where Paul Blanshard left off, even as it judiciously avoids Blanshard's more fevered assertions about a great international Catholic conspiracy. Should this secularization project win out, the Catholic Church will surely survive—but American democracy will have been fundamentally transformed. And the results, we may be sure, will not be very agreeable for some of those who cannot bring themselves, now, to challenge the charge that the Catholic Church, when it acts like the Catholic Church, is an "un-American institution."

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* See Heather MacDonald's review of Schlesinger's *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, beginning on p. 61 of this issue.—ED.

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Yes, Oswald Alone Killed Kennedy

Jacob Cohen

EVEN the strongest supporters of *JFK*, Oliver Stone's notorious film on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, concede that it is deceptive: fabricated footage gussied up as documentary fact; fictional characters and scenes offered as proof of perfidy; paranoid insinuations about the conscious involvement of the highest officials in the land; outright lies. Yet to an extraordinary number of often intelligent people, these characterizations seem utterly beside the point. "Don't trust anyone who says the movie is hogwash," writes a *Newsweek* critic, David Ansen, "and don't trust the movie either . . . [it] is a remarkable, a necessary provocation." "One of the worst great movies ever made," declaims Norman Mailer. One wonders: how false, fanciful, and downright mendacious does a work purporting to portray and interpret historical events need to be before it is not just chided but discounted, disqualified, disgraced?

Those who defend the film's meta-purposes seem confident that if not all, then some and *certainly at least one* of its basal assertions of fact reflect what actually happened in Dallas: more than one person fired at the President. And if there was more than one gunman, there is *prima-facie* evidence of a conspiracy of some sort or another.

Having spent a considerable part of my life over the last three decades studying and discussing the Kennedy assassination, I can testify to the tenacity of that basal assertion. Challenging the notion of multiple gunmen has become tantamount to suggesting that it was the United States which attacked Japan in 1941, Poland which attacked Germany in 1939. And yet, I will contend that for anyone who has seriously studied the original Warren Report on the assassination (and not just had it read to him by its critics); has gone over the materials produced in the reconsideration of that Report by the House of Representatives in 1977-78; and has familiarized himself with the many scientific studies over the years, including three separate reviews of the medical material, which have examined the testable bases of the single-assassin theory—to anyone who has done all this, the notion of multiple gunmen, on which nearly every conspiracy theory extant rests, is a demonstrable chimera. And if there was one and only one assassin, and if that assassin was Lee Harvey Oswald, then nearly every insinuation in *JFK*, and in the mountain of conspiracy literature which it summarizes, collapses.

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II

THE case for multiple assassins consists of four lines of argument: (1) there was not enough time for a single gunman to have done what the Warren Commission alleges Oswald did; (2) compelling eyewitness, photographic, and earwitness testimony place a second gunman on the fabled grassy knoll; (3) the evidence of Kennedy's wounds and the reaction of his body to the shots establishes the presence of assassins other than on the knoll; and (4) the so-called "single-bullet theory," popularly known as the "magic-bullet" theory, the indispensable prerequisite of the notion that there was only one assassin, is a palpable absurdity.

These arguments are mutually reinforcing, but it is fair to say if any one of them holds water, the single-assassin theory would be untenable. However, as we shall see, all four are baseless.

Consider the issue of timing. Repeatedly, like a mantra, *JFK*, and the critics it mimics, declare that the famous Zapruder film (a home movie taken of the assassination by a Dallas manufacturer, Abraham Zapruder) "established three shots in 5.6 seconds" and that such a feat would stretch the capacity of the most expert rifleman, and undoubtedly was beyond Oswald and his gun. In interviews and speeches Oliver Stone frequently refers to "the 5.6-second Zapruder film," as if that were all there was to it, 5.6 seconds, and many commentators on *JFK* dutifully repeat these data, usually in the movie's own tone of outraged incredulity.

Yet: (1) The Zapruder film, which is 30 seconds long *in toto*, firmly establishes only the final and unmistakable shot to Kennedy's head. (2) Even assuming that two hits occurred 5.6 seconds apart, nothing in Zapruder indicates that a possible third shot, which missed, had to have come *between* the two hits. The Warren Commission

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concluded only that there were probably three shots and that *the two hits*, not the three shots, came within 5.6 seconds of each other. The miss could have come first, or last, though it probably came first. That means the gunman had more than eight seconds to shoot, and more than five seconds—ample time—between the two hits. (3) Even if the miss had come between the two hits, there would still have been 2.8 seconds to fire and refire—enough time even for an amateur used to handling guns, like Oswald. Stone and/or his advisers know this, as does everyone who has studied the case.

Were there shots from the grassy knoll by another assassin? Allegedly, eyewitness, photographic, and earwitness testimony placed a second gunman there. The knoll, I would remind the reader, was in front and to the right of the President's car when he was first struck, and directly to his right when he was fatally shot in the head. The Warren Commission placed the lone gunman above and behind the President in the Texas Book Depository building.

Surely, the most significant eye- and earwitnesses to the assassination were Abraham Zapruder himself and his secretary, Marilyn Sitzman, who was standing next to him as he took his famous home movie. The two of them were on the knoll, on a three-foot-high concrete pedestal overlooking the scene and directly overlooking the entire area behind a five-foot wooden fence at the top of the knoll from behind which, Stone and the other conspiracists say, an assassin shot at and killed the President.

But here is a point omitted by Stone and the conspiracists: Zapruder and Sitzman were within 50 feet, above, slightly *behind*, and in clear line of sight of the alleged assassin and (in Stone's recreation) his alleged "spotter." Fifty feet is ten feet less than the distance between home plate and the mound. Understand: Zapruder and Sitzman were on the mound facing the batter, as it were, and Stone would have us believe that they did not happen to hear or see two assassins to their right front halfway down the third-base line, firing two explosive shots. They simply failed to glance that way during the shooting or to notice the gunman while he waited for the President to arrive.

Zapruder is now dead, but Sitzman was interviewed for a sensational five-part documentary produced by the Arts and Entertainment (A&E) Network on cable TV. Somehow, the interviewer did not ask her whether she noticed a man shooting the President just to her right front.

Those who have seen the A&E documentary will recall the gripping analysis of a black-and-white polaroid snapshot of the knoll which was taken by one Mary Moorman just before the fatal head shot. In that picture, we are told, one may now see the clear image of "the badge man," a man in uniform, who, allegedly, fired at the President from the knoll. Yet while that image may leap out at the consultants to the A&E documentary, it was not clear to the panel of photographic experts who, in 1977, perused it for the House Assassinations Committee.

Of course, those experts were not privy to the blown-up, "colorized" enhancement of the photo developed by the A&E consultants, who claim to see in the photo not only a man (nothing remarkable in that, it's a free country and people were allowed to roam about the knoll) but a hatless man in uniform. They even claim to be able to see the label on his shirt and, "perhaps," a gun. Well, if "badge man" is an assassin, he fired from a spot right next to, at most fifteen feet below and to the right of, Zapruder and Sitzman. Again, they did not notice.

THERE are other pictures of the knoll—22 persons were taking pictures in Dealey Plaza, the assassination site, that afternoon—and several are of the knoll at the time of the shooting. Over the years conspiracists have discerned in these pictures riflemen and rifles, only to have photographic expertise reveal the illusions created by light and shadow.

For example, in one set of photos purporting to show a rifleman in "the classic firing position," the rifleman, to be actual, would need to have been floating in the air nine feet above the ground. Another rifle, supposedly visible in Zapruder frame 413, turned out to be a small branch in a bush in front of the fence, and the head behind that bush, the one with a "tennis hat" on, would have to be the size of a lemon in order to have been where the critics say it is.

Notwithstanding Stone's insinuations, no one saw a gun on the knoll, though it would have been in the clear line of sight of hundreds of the 692 people who have been identified in Dealey Plaza. No one: not one of the eighteen people on the railroad bridge who, looking up Elm Street at the approaching President, could easily have spotted a gun about a hundred feet in front of them and slightly to their left; no one in the plaza, neither Zapruder nor Sitzman, who were on the knoll; none of the hundreds who, we presume, were following the presidential limousine with their eyes and need only have raised their gaze a few degrees to have seen the gun; not Lee Bowers, who surveyed the scene from a tower behind the alleged assassins; no one in the presidential caravan, including Secret-Service men whom film and photos show scanning the surrounding scene. (Were they ordered not to see anything? Have they remained silent to this day about those criminal orders?) On the other hand, six people saw the rifle *inside* the sixth-floor, southeast-corner window of the Book Depository: Oswald's rifle, the one that fired all the bullets that were recovered. Two people actually saw the rifle as it was fired, and two of them identified Oswald in a police lineup.

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Those who have seen the Stone film, or the A&E documentary, or are familiar with the conspiracy literature, may now protest vehemently: what about Jean Hill, the woman in the Stone film who fervently claims she saw a "gunman" running? What about the others who swear passionately that the shots came from the knoll? What about the many, like A.J. Holland, who saw gunsmoke on the knoll, and the sheer weight of earwitness testimony that the shots came from the knoll? What about the deaf mute who for 28 years has been trying to get someone to understand his signing message that, a few minutes before the assassination, from a distance of over a hundred yards, he saw men walking with rifles near the knoll?

And what about the lady who now claims to be the "babushka lady" visible in photos of the plaza, and who says she will go to her death believing there was a gunman on the knoll? And what of Gordon Arnold, who claims, after more than a quarter-century of silence, that he filmed the assassination from in front of the fence on the knoll, that he sensed bullets whizzing past his ear, and that after the shooting a man with "dirty hands," in a uniform, came up to him, weeping, and threw him to the ground, physically forcing him to relinquish the incriminating film? Arnold's is one of several stories by people who claim they were roughed up and threatened because they had seen inadmissible things. Stone graphically depicts these alleged brutalities and the reign of terror which insiders to the assassination have been enduring.

HERE are the answers. Jean Hill said she "saw a man running," not from the knoll but from the Depository. Stone has Hill say that the man was a "gunman." But a gunman, presumably, is a man holding a gun. Hill did not say that she saw a gun. Is it possible that, as many witnesses do, she has fused two disparate facts—the President is shot, a man is running—and created the saga she has made a career of telling?

Holland, who is the only one to say he saw a man with a submachine gun stand up in the back of the President's limousine, claims also to have seen smoke over the knoll. Others, too, saw smoke, and identified it with a shot. The Stone film shows a considerable puff of smoke wafting above the knoll, pretty much as Holland described it. But modern weapons do not make big puffs of smoke. Hot steam pipes do produce such cumulus effects, and there were hot steam pipes at the top of the knoll where the smoke was seen.

Beverly Oliver, the woman who claims to be the "babushka lady," not only swears "to her death" that the shots came from the knoll (although she saw no gun), but she also identifies herself as having been a nightclub singer in a club next to Jack Ruby's and has said that when Ruby, Oswald's eventual assassin, introduced her there to Oswald they casually identified themselves as "CIA agents." She says, too, that in 1968 she met for two hours with Richard Nixon, whom she ties to the killing. Stone knows all this detail, but omits much of it in order to create the character of a sympathetic nightclub singer terrified to tell the world about her certain knowledge of links between Oswald and Ruby. (No persuasive links between the two have ever been established.)

Was Gordon Arnold there? He does not appear in photos, though some find him in the Moorman photo right next to "badge man." (Apparently Arnold did not notice the "badge man" shooting the President.) As for the story that he was brutalized and his film removed—it is interesting that no one brutalized or even spoke to Zapruder and Sitzman, or removed them from the pivotal perch from which they filmed the assasination and, presumably, saw the assassins. And as for the deaf mute, whose 28 years of silent frustration were ended when A&E finally found someone to read his signs and put him on television, is it indecorous to suggest that his story sounds like a routine on *Saturday Night Live*?

Stone and others would have us believe that on the knoll that day there was a platoon of conspirators, incognito, surveying every person's eyes, entering minds and cameras, knowing infallibly who had incriminating evidence and who did not. Like Santa Claus, they knew who had been bad or good, and they brutalized only those who saw or photographed the bad thing. And these people, in fear and trembling, agreed to be silent. Now, nearly three decades later, these same victims have agreed to take their ten minutes in the spotlight at the invitation of A&E and Oliver Stone.

And the earwitnesses? Undeniably, several people thought shots came from the knoll, said so freely to the Warren Commission, the FBI, the Secret Service, and the Dallas police, and were reported as having said so. Fourteen years later, in 1977, at the request of the House Assassinations Committee, a panel of acoustical scientists and psychologists examined all the earwitness evidence and then correlated it with observations they made at Dealey Plaza when rifles were test-fired from the knoll and the Book Depository. They discovered that of 178 earwitness accounts which they sampled, 132 thought there were three shots, 149 thought there were three or fewer. Six people thought there were four shots; one thought there were five, and one, Jean Hill, heard six. (Six is the number that Stone, and most conspiracists, say were fired.)

With regard to the source of the shots: 49 of the 178 thought it was the Depository, 21 thought it was the knoll, 30 gave other sources, 78 did not know. Crucially, however, only four of the 178 thought shots came from more than one direction. Since we know that at least some shots came from the Depository—the rifle, Oswald's, which

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fired all the recovered bullets and shells was found there, and six people saw a rifle in the window—shots would have needed to have come from two directions if there were also shots from the knoll. The panel concluded:

> It is hard to believe a rifle was fired from the knoll. . . . [D]espite the various sources of confusion in the locus of any single shot, a second shot from a different location should be distinctive and different enough to cause more than four witnesses to report multiple origins for the shots.[1]

ACCORDING to *JFK*, there were ten to twelve assassins, firing six shots from three directions. No one heard it that way; no one. Nor do the conspiracists answer this question: if the idea (as Stone suggests) was to frame Oswald for having fired three shots, why fire six? Did the Conspiracy expect that no one would notice?

To take the full measure of what Stone and the others are suggesting, we must remember that this ingenious plot *intended* that the assassins on the knoll be invisible and escape unnoticed. But how could they have known where spectators would be, where cameras would be? Just behind the fence was a public parking lot, filled with cars. Anyone could have gone to retrieve his car at any time. And why does Stone not show us the (inevitably hilarious) planning session where it was decided that a feigned epileptic fit fifteen minutes before the shooting to distract attention from the gunmen on the knoll, a diversionary shot from the Depository, and an omniscient goon squad to rough up awkward witnesses would be enough to provide anonymity and safe passage to assassins standing in broad daylight, in clear view?

There is a further reason to scoff at speculations of a shot from the knoll: the alleged gunman, one of the world's finest (according to Stone) or one of the Mafia's finest (in other versions), firing at point-blank range, missed the car and everyone in it with a bullet which was never recovered. The now decisively authenticated X-rays and photographs which were taken of the President's body the night of the assassination establish that no shots struck the President or Governor John Connally (who was with him in the motorcade) except shots fired from above and behind. There were no hits from the knoll.

Again, viewers of Stone's film will protest: what of the doctors at Dallas's Parkland hospital, who for years after the shooting insisted that the small neat wound in Kennedy's throat was a wound of entry, inflicted from the front (hence, by another gunman)? What of their insistence, for years, that there was a massive wound of exit in the back, occipital region of his head, where the autopsy doctors had purported to find only a small wound of entry? And most memorably, what of the dramatic thrust of the President's body, backward and "to the left"—Kevin Costner, playing Stone's heroic protagonist, New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, repeats the phrase "to the left" five times, while the gory Zapruder frames show the President, indeed, thrust backward and leftward—a movement consistent only with a hit from the right front?

It is true that several Dallas doctors once thought the throat wound was an entry wound, and said so at the time. And a few of them later recalled massive damage to the back of his head, not on the right side where the autopsy doctors placed the damage. The Dallas doctors agreed that there was no time for a proper "medical examination" of the President; all of their efforts were aimed at saving his life, not examining his wounds. So frenzied were their ministrations that they did not even notice at the time a small wound of entry in his back and a small wound of entry in the back of his head. Later, after the President was peremptorily removed from Dallas to the autopsy in Washington, to the considerable professional chagrin of the Dallas doctors, several of them came to insist that the wound in the throat "looked like" a wound of entry, and that there was a massive default in the rear, occipital, portion of the President's head, a glaring fact somehow missed by the official autopsy team.

Over and again, Stone and the conspiracists refer us to these incongruous comments by the Dallas doctors. What they do not tell us is that these doctors changed their minds when they reviewed the X-rays and the photos taken at the autopsy for a *Nova* documentary on public television. The evidence in the X-rays and photos is of paramount importance. If the throat wound was an entry wound, that bullet, fired from the right front, would have torn into Kennedy's throat and probably out of the back or side of his neck. Or it would have lodged in the body causing appropriate damage, all of which would be visible in X-rays and photos. Unless the photos and X-rays are fake, the throat wound is not a wound of entry. Every one of the by now more than 20 forensic pathologists who have examined those documents agrees there was no strike to the throat from the front.

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[1] One further comment on the matter of earwitness testimony. The House Assassinations Committee in 1979 concluded that a tape recording of police communications at the time of the assassination registered four, not three, shots, and specifically, three shots from the Depository and one from the knoll. Solely on the basis of that piece of evidence, the Committee decided that an unseen gunman shot an (unrecovered) bullet, and missed. In 1982 the National Academy of Science asked a blue-ribbon panel of physicists and acoustical experts to review the recording and the accompanying studies which had persuaded the House Committee that there was a gunman on the knoll. The panel concluded unanimously and vigorously that the alleged sounds on the tape could not have been made at the time of the shooting, and also scoffed at the calculations and methodology of the House consultants.

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SIMILARLY with regard to the alleged massive wound of exit in the back of Kennedy's head—the result, according to Stone, of a bullet administered from the front right. The X-rays and photos clearly show that that massive wound of exit is on the right side of the head, not in the back, and was caused by a bullet entering in the rear of the skull where a small wound of entry was seen by the autopsy doctors.

Again, this is the conclusion of every one of the prominent forensic pathologists who have studied the photos and X-rays which show the location and nature of the wounds and the pattern of fracturing. Even Dr. Cyril Wecht, one of the stars of the A&E documentary, a frenetic critic of the official version, agreed on this point after examining the X-rays and photos over a two-day period. The Dallas doctors, too, examining these documents for the *Nova* program, agreed that their memory of the wound location had been erroneous.

Stone and the conspiracists, having spent hundreds of hours with the Zapruder film, examining it meticulously, frame by frame, must know all this. In frame 313, when Kennedy is struck in the head, and in subsequent frames, we see a large burst of pink—bone and brain matter—exploding out of the right side of his head, exactly where the X-rays and photos place it; the back of the head, clearly visible in these frames, is unruffled and completely intact. Where then is their theory of a massive rear exit? Robert Groden, one of Stone's technical advisers, has now taken to arguing that the Zapruder films too have been doctored, along with the X-rays and photos.

Well, are the X-rays and photos authentic? As to the photos, the analysis submitted to the House Assassinations Committee by a team of photographic experts found no evidence whatsoever of tampering. Far more important was the detailed report of the team of forensic anthropologists. Studying the photos of the President, fore and aft, the anthropologists meticulously measured the angle of his nasal septum, the lower third of the nose cavity, the nasal tip area, various features of his ear, the lip profile, facial creases, and the network of wrinkles across the back and side of his neck. All of them, when compared to previous, unquestionably valid photos, established that the wounded man in these photos was the dead President and no one else.

The authentication of the X-rays was equally decisive. X-rays are like fingerprints. Since every person has a unique bone structure, it is quite easy for forensic anthropologists to identify the mutilated remains of persons killed in combat or plane crashes. The only thing needed are previous X-rays for comparison; of course, many were available in this instance. Thus, the deviation in Kennedy's nasal septum was noted and compared with his other X-rays. The bony rims around his eyes, the honeycomb air cells of the mastoid bone, the saddle-shaped depressions at the base of his skull, the bony projections along the spine—all exactly matched the comparison X-rays, as did features in the X-rays of Kennedy's lower torso.

Furthermore, the damage in the photos matched the damage found in the X-rays. Let us be clear about what this means: these are X-rays and photos of the damaged President, taken the only time in his life that he was damaged in that way. If they are phony, whose body and face are in the fake X-rays and photos? The panel of experts did not argue that the government was incapable of contemplating forgery; they argued that such a forgery, even if contemplated, would be next to impossible: "There can be no doubt that they are the X-rays of John F. Kennedy, and no other person."

Why did President Kennedy lurch backward and to the left if he was struck from behind? Twice now, panels of experts examining the question—once for the Rockefeller Commission in 1972, yet again for the House Assassinations Committee—have concluded that no bullet, by itself, could have caused that physical reaction. Rather, the motion has been attributed to "a seizure-like neuromuscular reaction to major damage inflicted to nerve centers in the brain." The House panel even assassinated some live goats to demonstrate the effect.

LET us turn, finally, to the mother of all of Stone's and the other conspiracists' canards, their account of the so-called "magic bullet," a term so deeply entrenched in discussions of the assassination that routine newspaper accounts of the latest conspiracy allegations refer to it, without quotation marks, as if it were the God-given name of the bullet. I have seen Stone's film three times and each time Kevin Costner's derisive account of the Warren Commission's supposed position on the subject has brought gasps of incredulous, mutinous laughter from the audience:

> The magic bullet enters the President's back headed downward at an angle of 17 degrees; it then moves upward in order to leave Kennedy's body from the front of his neck, wound number two, where it waits 1.6 seconds, presumably in mid-air, where it turns right then left [right then left, Costner repeats] and continues into Connally's body at the rear of his right armpit, wound number three. The bullet then heads downward at an angle of 27 degrees, shattering Connally's fifth rib, and exiting from the right side of his chest, wound number four. The bullet then turns right and reenters Connally's body at the right wrist, wound number five, shattering the radius bone. The bullet then exits Connally's wrist, wound number six, takes a dramatic U-turn and buries itself into Connally's left thigh from which it later falls

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out and is found in almost pristine condition in a corridor of Parkland Hospital.

The Warren Commission, it should be unnecessary to say, argued no such thing. It contended that Kennedy and Connally were struck by the same bullet, somewhere between frames 207 and 223 of the Zapruder film. During that one-second period, the two men disappear behind a road sign. Just before Connally disappears behind the sign, and again a little less than a second—fifteen frames—later when he reappears, his right wrist is close to his lap, directly over his left thigh. He is holding the lid of a big Texas hat, knuckles up. His head has turned to the right—Connally has remembered doing this after hearing a shot (probably the first shot, the one that missed)—and in turning, his shoulders rotate rightward slightly, bringing his body into perfect alignment to receive all five of his wounds. It is only then, when the Commission held the two men were hit, that Connally could have been struck in a way to cause the scars which he indubitably has, to this day.

On three separate occasions in the last 20 years, panels of photographic experts analyzing the Zapruder frames and all the photographs have confirmed this analysis. Using the same evidence, and with the added help of wound locations established by X-rays and photographs, the panel of experts assembled by the House Committee showed that a line drawn through Connally and Kennedy's wounds leads right back, straight as an arrow, to the window from which someone fired Oswald's gun: no turns, no pauses.

Now consider Connally's position when Stone and other conspiracists say he was struck. (Costner: "Connally's turning here now, frame 238, the fourth shot, it misses Kennedy and takes Connally.") As I pointed out in COMMENTARY seventeen years ago, in that frame Connally

> has turned 90 degrees to the right and is facing out of the side of the car. A bullet striking Connally when the critics say he was hit would then have had to exit from the chest at a downward angle, to have taken two sharp turns upward, in midair—right and then left into the knuckle side of the wrist; and then, upon exiting on the palm side, further up in the air than the wound of entry, would have had to execute a very sharp U-turn into the thigh: plainly impossible.[2]

In other words, it is not the Warren Commission's account which requires these absurd zigs and zags, it is Stone's.

And the "almost pristine" bullet found "in a corridor" at Parkland Hospital? That bullet, unquestionably fired from Oswald's gun, was found next to Connally's stretcher in the basement of the hospital, exactly where it would be to support the single-bullet theory. It was not pristine; it lacked lead from its core in the amount found in Connally. It was also flattened at one end, and bent at its axis. In 1978, Professor Vincent Guinn, responding to a decade of demands by critics, employed recently improved neutron-activation techniques to compare the traces of antimony, silver, and copper in the lead from the "magic bullet" with the trace amounts of those metals in the lead recovered from Connally's wrist. He concluded that the wrist lead almost certainly came from lead missing from the "magic bullet."

Now, if the bullet found in the basement of Parkland Hospital next to Connally's stretcher, fired from Oswald's gun and missing the very lead found in Connally's wrist, is not the one which struck Connally, how did it get next to his stretcher? Stone suggests that someone from Assassination Central was sent over to drop a spare bullet somewhere in the hospital. Why the basement? Why Connally's stretcher and not Kennedy's? How could the Conspiracy have known where Connally's stretcher would be? How could it have known then that a bullet which had ended in the soft flesh of Connally's thigh needed to be placed with his stretcher in order to confirm a single-bullet theory which was not developed for another two months? And if this was not the bullet that hit Connally, what happened to the bullet that did?

In the film we see colonels and other gray eminences directing the autopsy like puppeteers, ordering doctors to lie about the damage to the President, to silence their curiosity about dangerous matters, and forever. But at that point the Conspiracy could not have known what directions to give. The single-bullet theory, to repeat, was not developed until months later, and only an omniscient demon could have figured out so soon what precise changes would be necessary in the autopsy report. When and how did the Conspiracy brief its agents in the autopsy room, and who did the briefing, and who briefed the briefers? It is a shame that Stone did not invent scenes dramatizing all this; they too would have been hilarious.

Similar objections may be raised to the theory developed by David Lifton in a best-selling book and reiterated in the A&E documentary. Kennedy's body, we are told, was taken to a secret laboratory after its arrival in Washington while an elaborate ruse—empty coffins, diversionary caravans—convinced the public that his body was being taken directly to the Bethesda Naval Hospital. With about 40 minutes to do their work, the agents of the Conspiracy completely altered the President's wounds to make it look as if he had been hit by one assassin, firing from behind, disguising even the signs of their intervention from

[2] "Conspiracy Fever," COMMENTARY, October 1975.

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the X-rays and photos, although not from Lifton and A&E.

In this version, then, the autopsy itself is honest, only the doctors are working on an altered body. But how could the Conspiracy have known what alterations to make? How could its agents be sure 40 minutes would be enough? Scores of people would need to be involved: those who prepared the alternate route, those who switched the body, those who performed the 40-minute surgical miracle, those who carefully brought the body to Bethesda through the back door, those who sent advance news of the nature of the wounds from the Parkland Hospital or the President's plane. And all have remained silent about the matter to this day.

There was, in sum, nothing magic about the "magic bullet." And there was no need to alter the body, no need to fabricate an autopsy. The overwhelming burden of the evidence indicates that one assassin shot the President, just as the Warren Commission said.

III

WAS Lee Harvey Oswald that single assassin? Chief Justice Earl Warren, who according to Stone was a perjurer and either a willing or a moronic accomplice to a massive coverup, said that in a lifetime as a lawyer and judge he had never seen such a clear case of guilt. Here I can only sketch the outline of the case, but even a sketch is sufficient to demonstrate the absurdity of ubiquitous charges that Oswald did not shoot the President, that he was a "patsy" set up to deflect attention from other assassins.

First, there is this pivotal fact: Oswald worked in the building from which the President was shot and obtained the job there, unsuspiciously, three weeks before unsuspicious decisions were made (by Kenneth O'Donnell, Kennedy's friend) which occasioned the President's appearance in front of that building.

Stone tells us in the film that on the day of the assassination the Conspiracy "sent" Oswald to the building. But it did not have to; he reported for work as usual. What Stone does not tell us is that Oswald carried a gun to work that morning. A coworker who drove him in (Oswald could not drive) reported that Oswald had a long object wrapped in paper which he held from below, cupped in his palm, military style. ("Curtain rods," was Oswald's answer to the obvious question.)

Paper that had been fashioned as a gun carrier was later found on the sixth floor, near the murder window. Oswald's fingerprints were on it, as was his palm print at the base where he would have cupped it in the manner described. Also on the bag were strands of wool from the blanket in which Oswald's rifle had been wrapped. There were no curtain rods. The murder rifle, Oswald's, which fired all the bullets and shells later recovered,[3] was also found on the sixth floor. On it were strands of wool from Oswald's shirt and Oswald's palm print.[4] Oswald's finger and palm prints were also on the card boxes used as a gun prop and on the brown bag. (Stone mentions none of this.) In addition, two eyewitnesses who saw the gunman in the window identified Oswald as that gunman.

According to Stone and the conspiracists, the plotters went to extraordinary lengths to link Oswald to a rifle which they also claim was not used. But why not link him to the "real" gun? Viewers may remember very brief shots of a photograph of Oswald being altered. These shots are spliced into *JFK*, out of context and narrative sequence, in order to set the scene for Stone's later contention that a photograph of Oswald holding the murder rifle and pistol in his backyard was the crudest of forgeries. In that photo, the conspiracists say, two-thirds of Oswald's face has been pasted onto the chin and body of a stand-in. A distinct line across the chin shows the intervention clearly, and anyway the shadows cast by the nose are inconsistent with the shadows cast by the stand-in body.

What Stone does not tell us is that the photo was taken with Oswald's box camera, that his wife remembers taking it, that it is one of several taken of him with gun and pistol at that time, and that after exhaustive examination photographic experts employed by the House Assassinations Committee found even the challenged photo to be entirely unexceptionable, shadows and all. It also should be noted that this photo, found among Oswald's effects after the assassination, is superfluous to the proof that he possessed the gun: there are many other, superior, evidences of that.

STONE scoffs at the rifle, "the worst military weapon in the world." But the laugh is on him, for the neutron-activation analysis and ballistics findings prove that this supposedly defective rifle fired the bullet which deposited lead in Connally's wrist and also the bullet which hit Kennedy in the skull.[5] Somone used

[3] One wonders how the conspirators recovered and disposed of the embarassing bullets from the other alleged guns. They could not have known where they would end up. Scores of collaborators would have been needed, at the ready, in the plaza, in the car, in the hospital, to snatch away the damning missiles without being noticed.

[4] Conspiracists make a good deal of the charge that there were no other prints on the gun. The charge is untrue. The FBI report did not say there were no other prints, it said there were no other "identifiable" prints, which is not unusual. As experts testified, the rough wood stock and poor-quality metal of the gun tended to absorb moisture from the skin, making a clear print unlikely.

[5] The traces of silver and antimony in the lead removed from Kennedy's brain were compared to traces in the lead found in bullet fragments, fired from Oswald's gun, which were recovered from the presidential limousine. Again, as was the case with Connally's wrist, the match was perfect.

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that rifle very effectively, and if it was not Oswald, Stone needs to explain why this brilliant Conspiracy, which used one world-class marksman, gave him the worst weapon in the world. He should also explain why, if the Conspiracy was framing Oswald, it would have wanted to link him to such a ridiculous weapon.

Oswald left the building immediately after the shooting, retrieved a light-colored jacket and pistol from his rooming house, and about 45 minutes after the assassination was seen shooting a Dallas policeman named Tippit. Twelve eyewitnesses identify Oswald as Tippit's assailant—although, to be sure, a few others, the ones presented by Stone and the A&E documentary, do not. The shells expended at the scene and the bullets in Tippit match the pistol found on Oswald when he was arrested. His jacket was found nearby. When the eyewitnesses reported the shooting to the police, using the radio in Tippit's car, police swarmed to the area. After a phoned report to them that a man had been seen ducking into a theater without paying, they rushed to the theater and arrested Oswald, who resisted, for the murder of Tippit. On him was the murder pistol; he had ordered it by mail, ten months earlier.

Astonishingly, Stone and many other conspiracists even question the contention that Oswald shot Tippit. Citing inconsistencies in eyewitness reports, which are to be expected in nearly all such reports, they imply that the bullets and shells were a plant, that the real ones were removed, that the jacket was a plant, and that the narrative by which the police traced Oswald to the theater was a contrived fiction.

What may have happened, according to Stone and the others, is that the Dallas police were expecting Oswald at the theater. They would murder someone in the neighborhood, a Dallas policeman murdered with the cooperation of Dallas policemen, and they would blame it on Oswald, presumably to prove that he was a murdering sort. The reader is invited to recapitulate the planning which would need to go into this part of the Conspiracy, involving now new bullet-snatchers and -replacers in the Dallas police, the elimination of anyone who could prove that Oswald was elsewhere than next to Tippit's car when the officer was shot, etc. Of course, all parties to this part of the Conspiracy have remained silent ever since.

It is often asked why Oswald denied having killed the President, as though guilty people do not deny things all the time. The fact is that Oswald denied everything. He himself was the first to insist that the backyard photo of him with the gun was a forgery. Shown it during his interrogation, he dismissed it at a glance. He denied having hunted in this country; he denied possessing the rifle, any rifle; he denied ever using the pseudonym, "Alec Hidell," which he had used to order the guns and on several identification documents; he made up an easily contradicted story that the manager of the Depository brought a rifle to the building; he denied the curtain-rod tale, saying he carried only his lunch to work that morning; he denied killing Tippit; when asked his reason for visiting his estranged wife and children on Thursday, assassination eve, rather than his usual Friday, he made up a story about a birthday party; he denied using an alias at his rooming house. He also refused to take a polygraph test. The law familiarly says that lies of this sort indicate a "consciousness of guilt" especially if they are explicable only by the hypothesis that the accused knows he is guilty.

To sum up: Oswald (1) worked in the building which was the only source of shots; (2) owned and possessed the one and only murder rifle; (3) brought it to work with him the morning of the murder; (4) was at the murder window at the time the President was shot; (5) left the scene immediately after the shooting; (6) shot an officer who attempted to question him and then forcibly resisted arrest; (7) lied about crucial matters of fact when interrogated.

There is an eighth reason to believe he was the killer: this was not his first assassination attempt. Among the photographs in Oswald's effects were several of a house and adjoining driveway. Weeks after the assassination, the FBI discovered that the house in the photo was that of General Edwin Walker, a right-wing, anti-Castro, anti-civil-rights fanatic. The G-men irrefutably established the exact date the photo was taken, which turned out to be just before someone unsuccessfully tried to assassinate Walker on April 10, 1963. The photo was taken with Oswald's camera; Oswald had a collection of news stories about the assassination attempt; bullets that had slammed into Walker's wall were consistent with Oswald's gun; a note written to his wife at the time, and her suspicions voiced then as well, indicate that he was Walker's would-be assassin. In the Marines he had twice been court-martialed, once for threatening a superior officer. Needless to say, Oliver Stone tells us nothing of this.

Why would Oswald try to kill a right-wing general? An obvious hypothesis, the one Stone and the critics feverishly try to silence, is that the attempt had something to do with Oswald's intense left-wing sympathies. Stone's campaign to transform him into a long-term right-winger, in league with Castro-hating activists, involves biographical surgery even more radical than the surgery which allegedly transformed the President's wounds the night of the assassination.

Oswald was already a left-winger at the age of thirteen when he distributed pro-Rosenberg material in New York. He defected to the Soviet Union and attempted to commit suicide when, notwithstanding his offer of radar data, the land

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of his dreams refused him citizenship. Disillusioned with the Soviet Union, he returned to the U.S. and transferred his fantasies to a new hero, Castro, whose picture he kept by his bed. He monitored radio broadcasts from Havana on his shortwave radio.

Oswald subscribed to the Communist *Daily Worker* and the Trotskyist *Militant*; these are the newspapers he holds in the authentic photos of him with gun and pistol taken in his backyard. He formed a one-person chapter of the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee (FPCC), handed out FPCC leaflets, which he himself printed, and spoke on the radio in its behalf. Imagining himself a Castro operative, and acting alone, as always, he briefly attempted to infiltrate an anti-Castro group in New Orleans but then immediately revealed his pro-Castro sympathies, to the group's considerable dismay. He composed a schmaltzy and horrifically spelled "historic diary," as he called it, and several paeans to Marxism. He visited the Cuban and Russian embassies in Mexico City in October 1963, seeking a visa to Cuba, and reacted in fury when denied his request.

This recital only scratches the surface of Oswald's left-wing record and his unstable, lone-wolf personality. But it is enough to sustain at least the possibility that the sole assassin of John F. Kennedy was a left-wing fantasist who found himself working in a building in front of which would come the President of the United States, the man whom Castro had publicly named as responsible for assassination attempts on his, Castro's, life. The same fantasist who went to the Soviet Union expecting to be accepted as a hero (and told his Russian wife that someday he would be "president of the world") now thought, incoherently, stupidly, that he would become a hero in Cuba as the assassin of Castro's enemies: General Walker and President Kennedy. Character, as the Greeks said, is fate.

IV

IF THERE was only one assassin and he was Lee Harvey Oswald, if there was no massive frameup or coverup, then Stone's and every other conspiracy theory currently before the public are fatally wounded. The government's allegedly ubiquitous hand disappears. Absent that hand, what other grand conspirators—military industrialists, mafiosi—would use so unlikely a killer, stage so unlikely a killing?

For nearly 30 years, platoons of conspiracists have concertedly scavenged the record, floating their appalling and thrilling might-have-beens, unfazed by the contradictions and absurdities in their own wantonly selective accounts, often consciously, cunningly deceitful. They have refused to let go of any shred of their earliest suspicions, even when these have been demolished by decisive scientific findings. And the media have patronized them, for journalists love their thrilling insinuations and share many of their philosophical and political assumptions; and with regard to the assassination, they remain stone ignorant. Small wonder that 85 percent of the American public thinks there was a conspiracy of some sort.

Recently, 13,000 copies of a new study guide, sympathetic to *JFK*, were sent to American high-school teachers. Our students know nothing about the case or the times; their teachers remember little, and many of them, especially the most "liberated," hold the view that to *question* any official version of anything is important in and of itself, even if the questions are based on palpable falsehoods. I do not think we should rejoice that our children ask questions in this manner. I think we should weep; and scold the scurrilous.

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Seeing the Nakedness of His Father

Leon R. Kass

STANDING in the large men's locker room of the National Capitol YMCA, getting dressed after my swim and shower, I overheard a conversation taking place out of my sight, on the other side of my row of lockers: "You wait right here; I'll be back soon, after my shower."

On my return from the shower a minute before, I had glimpsed, out of the corner of my eye, a young child, perhaps three years old or four, playing on the floor far down the neighboring aisle, a child much too small, thought I, to be left unattended amid this motley crowd of unfamiliar men. While I was fantasizing how I might abduct the boy for a few minutes, just to teach the father a lesson, I heard another voice arresting his movement to the shower: "You shouldn't bring her in here." "Why not?" "Because of all the naked men." "So what," replied the father, "she sees me naked all the time and thinks nothing of it." "How old is she?" "Four. She doesn't know or care anything about sex or even gender." "You mean she doesn't know the difference between girls and boys?" "Sure, but it doesn't mean anything to her. Why are you so uptight?" "Because many people in here don't feel comfortable parading naked in front of young girls; besides, don't forget, they lock people up who expose themselves before children—just like this." "You have a sick mind," says the father, and goes off to shower.

Well, thought I (having been taught a lesson and grateful that I had not carried out my mock abduction), at least the little girl has a father who spends "quality time" with her on a weekend afternoon. When she grows up, she will perhaps come to regard her father—and herself—as just one of the boys. Socrates, who once playfully proposed common gymnasia for men and women (as well as communal rearing of children), must be chuckling in Hades.

It certainly is a new world, and not only in the gym. A few years ago, in a class I was teaching on the book of Genesis, a bright, argumentative (male) undergraduate, with a strong Jewish religious background, took great exception to the fuss made in the Bible's early stories about nakedness: "What's the big deal? What's wrong with seeing your father naked? I shower with my father all the time; we're pals." Love, camaraderie, and affection—yes. Awe, fear, reverence, shame, and modesty—no. Dad—he too is just one of the boys.

Once upon a time, Father was a figure of authority to every young boy. (Today, many a young boy can consider himself lucky just to have a father in the house.) To be sure, authority may have been shared with Mother, but Papa was the imposing figure. His superior size and strength promised safety; his voice of authority laid down the rules and established reliable order; his patient instruction encouraged growth. At the same time—and on the other hand—Father's power often inspired fear and awe; his moral authority, shame and guilt; and his superior competence, a sense of inadequacy which could sometimes lead to envy. And then there was his pride of place with Mother, and all that that entailed—the so-called Oedipal problem made notorious by Freud.

This highly complex aggregate of mixed feelings and attitudes makes son-to-father relationships very unusual. They certainly make difficult, if not impossible, any easygoing friendship, which usually requires and fosters equality. One cannot simply be friends with someone one holds in awe. Yet these sentiments—even the uncomfortable ones like fear and shame—are perfectly suited, on the one side, to the parental task of rearing and, on the other side, to the possibility of inheriting not just life but a decent way of life from those responsible for our proper cultivation and moral development. Precisely because he is capable of inspiring awe as well as security, shame as well as orderliness, distance as well as nearness, emulation as well as confidence, and fear as well as hope, the father is able to do the fatherly work of preparing boys for moral manhood, including, eventually, their own fatherhood.

To be sure, the power can be abused. And even

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where parental intentions are purely benevolent, it is often difficult to inspire by word and deed the right mixture of those sentiments which properly encourage and those sentiments which properly restrain. More important, errant paternal conduct can easily betray the teachings paternal authority aims to impart; a philandering father, once exposed, has trouble teaching fidelity. Trust betrayed is hard to recover, and hypocrisy is often unforgiven, *especially* by one's children. Still, that, and how, Father exercises paternal authority, and, equally, how boys come to terms with Father make all the difference for the future life of the sons.

ONE of our oldest stories of fathers and sons is the tale of the sons of Noah—the very story that so distressed my student. Coming early in the book of Genesis, it is the Bible's first tale of intergenerational conflict, indeed, the first tale explicitly about fathers and sons. Since "first tales" are often exemplary and paradigmatic, we would do well to consider it closely.

The story of the sons of Noah (Genesis 9:18-27) begins an account of the dispersion of peoples and the division of mankind into separate nations with separate ways. It is the immediate sequel to the covenant following the Flood, in which God promises all living creatures never again to cut off all flesh, never again to flood the earth. Part of the new dispensation is the institution of law (for the first time). This is the so-called Noahide code, which distinguishes the life of post-diluvian man from the anarchic "state of nature" inhabited by his antediluvian forebears. With the law now established—not the revealed, parochial laws of Israel but a universal law for all mankind, called by a later tradition "natural law"—all thought turns to the task of perpetuation: will the fathers be able to transmit the proper way to their sons?

The first story after the new covenant is, fittingly, precisely about the question of perpetuation, and, therewith, about the problem of father and sons. As a new beginning for humankind, it also anticipates the dispersion of peoples and, with it, the appearance of different ways of life, each tied into differences among earlier progenitors:

> And the sons of Noah, that went forth from the ark, were Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and of these was the whole earth overspread [9:18-19].

The story's introduction leads our imagination backward to the solitary ark of life afloat on the earth-covering waters and forward to the future time in which the whole earth will be covered with people (not with water). The narrative immediately focuses on the sons, and especially on Ham, the son who is not only centrally named but who is mentioned a second time, this time as *father* (of Canaan and the Canaanites; of this, more later).

But there is something strange about the order of names. Ham (whose name means "hot, warm") is, in fact, the youngest son; the eldest is Japheth (whose name means "expansion," though it is also closely related to "beauty"), and central is Shem (meaning "name"—not only an appellation, but also renown or respect). The order of birth and the order of naming are not the same: nature and convention are not identical. We wonder whether the differences in the given names of the sons might not be revealing of differences in character. If so, the order of nature (birth) might need to be replaced by an order of goodness or merit—a suggestion that informs much of the early part of Genesis.

We are moved to think about order, natural and conventional, not only by the puzzlements about the sequence of the sons but also by the reference to the departure from the ark after the Flood. When the earth was fully dry, God had commanded Noah to leave the ark, "thou, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee"—in keeping with the fact that life had entered the ark male and female but was to emerge "after their families." But Noah reverses the order, and emerges first with his sons, and only then his wife and his sons' wives. Failing to give proper place to his wife, Noah has (perhaps inadvertently) failed to appreciate the right order of the household, failed to see that leading a family means more than sowing your seed, failed to recognize that it requires honoring *both* father and mother if transmission is to take place. Measure for measure, as we shall see, Noah will have his own paternal authority challenged by one of his sons.

Noah, it must be admitted straightaway, contributes to his own undoing.

> And Noah the husbandman [*ish ha'adama*; or "master of the earth"] began and planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine and was drunken; and he was uncovered in his tent [9:20-21].

Noah's interest in the vineyard—like that of any human being—is understandable. The miraculous discovery of fermentation enables the fruit of the vine to yield more than mere sustenance: wine "to gladden the heart of man" elevates the spirit, and enables man to obtain (also from the earth) a partial relief from the curse upon the earth that makes him sweat for his bread. Yet, at the same time, wine is the cause of drunkenness, of the erosion of the ability to make distinctions, of chaos. The Hebrew word translated "began" also has the meaning of "being profane"; says the great 11th-century Hebrew commentator Rashi, "He profaned [degraded] himself, for he should

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have occupied himself first with planting something different."[1]

GIVEN his ordeal upon the waters, one can perhaps understand Noah's turn to drink. He may well have sought solace in the grape, or even forgetfulness. Like the Flood which covered over the earliest beginnings, so drink covers over all painful memories of destruction and desolation. Alternatively, being simple (*tamim*; 6:9), Noah may just not have foreseen the power or consequences of wine. Many an innocent is unwittingly laid low by drink. Yet regardless of his motives, and despite his possible desire to forget his origins, Noah in fact returns to the shameful naked condition of the aboriginal state: "he was uncovered in his tent." His drunkenness robs Noah of his dignity, paternal authority, and humanity. It leaves him prostrate rather than upright; stripped of his clothing, naked, exposed, and vulnerable to disgrace, he appears merely as a *male*, not as a father—not even as a humanized, rational animal. Noah will not be the last man who degrades and unfathers himself through drink. Parental authority and respectability are precarious indeed.

But the real damage requires that his degradation be observed, and observed by his sons:

> And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers without [9:22].

Ham is identified again as "the father of Canaan": as we think about father-son relations, we are invited to see that Canaan will later be affected by the present activity of his father, Ham. Ham here does two things: he sees and he tells. The first might have been (and probably was) accidental, but the second shows that—for this son, at least—it could just as well have been intentional. Ham looks upon his father's shame and *traffics* in it.

What does it mean to "look upon the nakedness" of one's father? And what sort of a human being would gladly do so and boast about it? In the story of man and woman in the garden, the discovery of nakedness is an epochal event, the immediate consequence of gaining knowledge of good and bad. Nakedness there means preeminently sexuality itself. Sexual neediness, its dependence on another person not under one's control, its resistance to self-command, and its link with our perishability are all reasons why sexual self-consciousness is colored with shame, and why we move immediately and almost instinctively to cover up.[2] But here, in the Noah story, we are considering the further meaning of seeing nakedness *uncovered*, of removing clothing, and not between man and woman but between father and son.

It is true that, later in the Torah, the expression "uncover the nakedness of" is a euphemism for "have sexual relations with." For example, the law of forbidden unions (Leviticus 18) is expressed entirely in the form, "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of. . . ." For this reason, some commentators have suggested that Ham performed some abominable deed upon his drunken father. But there is no textual warrant for such a suggestion.[3] Besides, what Ham did is more than sufficiently odious, even though he did not lay a hand on Noah.

NOAH, without his clothes, and prostrate in his tent in a drunken stupor, lies dehumanized and "unfathered," stripped of all human ways (though as a result of a peculiarly human way, the way of Bacchus). Ham's viewing confirms and ratifies his father's unfathering. To put it sharply, Ham's viewing—and telling—is, metaphorically, an act of patricide and incest, of overturning the father *as a father*. Without disturbing a hair on Noah's head, Ham engages in father-killing.

This overturning of the father is not the overturning of his biological paternity or the taking of his life; on the contrary, he is overturned precisely by being reduced to mere male-source-of-seed. Eliminated is the father as authority, as guide, as teacher of law, custom, and a way of life. Ham sees and celebrates only the natural and

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[1] Noah's susceptibility to Dionysian chaos was already revealed in an earlier episode, his sacrifice after leaving the ark. Without any divine instructions, Noah builds an altar unto the Lord and upon it offers burnt-offerings of *every* clean beast and *every* clean fowl. In thus offering up scores of his former ark-mates, Noah shows something of the wildness of antediluvian man. His impulse to express gratitude is, under the circumstances, thoroughly intelligible, but his belief that God would like to gorge Himself on roast meat is utterly unfounded. Noah, like most gift-givers, assumes that (1) God would like a gift, and (2) a gift from me; not knowing *what* He would like, Noah further assumes that (3) He would like what I like, because (4) He is more or less like me, only more so. Noah's sacrifice reveals *Noah's* lust for meat—or, at the very least, his blood lust, his willingness to shed blood. God's response to Noah's sacrifice is, at best, ambivalent: "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; *for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*" (8:21; emphasis added). In place of wildness, God immediately establishes the Noahide law and covenant—which is then challenged in the present tale.

[2] For an extensive discussion of sexual nakedness, see my essay, "Man and Woman: An Old Story," in *First Things*, November 1991.

[3] A full analysis and decisive refutation of this position are given by U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part Two: From Noah to Abraham* (1964), pp. 150-53. The pivotal piece of evidence is this: "Of Shem and Japheth it is said, in contradistinction to Ham's action, *their faces were turned away*, AND THEY DID NOT SEE THEIR FATHER'S NAKEDNESS (v. 23), from which we may infer, convincingly, that Ham's sin consisted of seeing only. Furthermore, the statement (*ibid.*), *and covered the nakedness of their father*, supports this interpretation: if the covering was an adequate remedy, it follows that the misdemeanor was confined to seeing."

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barest fact of sex; he is blind to everything that makes transmission and rearing possible.

As Robert Sacks has pointed out, Ham implicitly rejects the covenant and life under law, designed to replace the wild antediluvian world. Anticipating the various paganisms that will soon be founded by his descendants, Ham, "the father of Canaan," gives primacy to the merely temporal and amoral beginnings. He looks back to precovenantal (or natural) origins.[4]

But the nature to which Ham looks is utterly demystified. His shamelessness not only violates paternal honor and authority; it also violates sexuality itself. To see this better we need a brief excursion into the (very complex) subject of shame.

Our English word, "shame," is, I believe, too broad for the phenomenon. Help comes from the ancient Greeks who distinguished two "kinds" of shame—*aischyne* and *aidos*. The origin of *aischyne* is dishonor; we experience it in violating man-made codes and mores. The origin of *aidos* is awe; we feel it especially when we stand before things that *naturally* inspire reverence, things which are mysterious, things which have a power or a secret that we should respect. We feel *aidos* when we enter the darkness of a cave or a forest, when we enter a temple or a courtroom, when we stand before mighty human figures—a Churchill, Einstein, Tolstoy, or Kant. And we feel it—or should feel it—with regard to sex: here, too, there is mysterious power to which we must pay respect, here, too, there are invisible and secret meanings we ought to acknowledge. Not by accident did the Greeks call the sexual organs *aidoia*, the "awesome things" (that is, shame-and-awe-inspiring things—not "awesome" in the current, California meaning).[5]

Ham looks without *aidos*—without awe—upon his father's sexuality. For him, there is nothing here to respect, not even as the mysterious source and ground of his own existence. His father's genitalia are a mere appendage; in shameless looking, their meaning is excised. Ham is thus guilty also of (metaphorical) castration. Moreover, that he speaks irreverently about what he has seen proves that he understands and celebrates what he has done.

Ham, who transgresses a most sacred, if unpromulgated, law, becomes the father of peoples—including the Canaanites and the Egyptians—whose abominable sexual practices will later be the antipodes to the Hebrew laws of purity. Here, in the first generation after the first institution of law, nature tosses up its first antinomian rebel.

WHAT sort of human being is Ham? What kind of person delights in rebelling against or exposing preexisting law and authority? What kind of person is utterly without *aidos*? Most often, he is the would-be tyrant, a man who seeks self-sufficiency, who would (if possible) become his own father and author, whose creatureliness and dependence are an affront to his autonomous self-conception. Patricide (and incest)—both literal and metaphorical—are "crimes" of the tyrant, as we know from Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*. Like Oedipus, Ham commits (metaphorical) patricide, and his descendants practice (literal) incest. One of his descendants, Nimrod (whose name connotes rebelliousness), will conquer an empire and will seek to make himself the all-powerful and self-sufficing lord of the earth.

But tyrants are not the only antinomians. The philosopher, too, sees through the arbitrary character of law and custom, and looks to nature, all in an effort to learn the unvarnished truth. Put in its best light, Ham's deed might be construed as an act of shameless curiosity, of an unbridled willingness to look at or into anything, of a desire to know the origins and an unwillingness to have them obscured by either forgetfulness or custom, of a desire to see nature clearly, by and for oneself, utterly uncovered, demystified, and unhidden. After all, the Greek word for truth, *aletheia*, means unhiddenness, that which has been brought out of hiding, that which now lies uncovered and exposed to the mind's eye.

Ham's delight in *telling* what he has seen inclines us to think him more tyrannical than philosophical; not before Nietzsche did the true philosopher shout from the rooftops his privately uncovered subversive knowledge. Seeing for oneself was, in the greatest philosophers of antiquity, generally combined with reticence and with a philanthropic disposition to preserve a salutary adherence to law for their compatriots (see, e.g., Plato's *Crito*). But from the Bible's point of view, it seems to make little difference. With respect to the law and, hence, with respect to the crucial matter of fathers and sons, the philosopher and the would-be tyrant are equally suspect. Disinterested gazing-upon and rebellious seeing-through are both "against the law." For the sake of law-abidingness, the attitude most needful will reverently let sleeping fathers lie, and will act to cover them up. Filial piety is the indispensable partner of law-abidingness and righteousness.

NOAH'S other two sons are more properly disposed. One does not envy them their situation. They were no doubt shocked

[4] Robert Sacks, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1991). I owe much to this remarkable book.

[5] This discussion of *aidos* draws heavily on a profound essay by Kurt Riezler, "Comment on the Social Psychology of Shame," *American Journal of Sociology*, January 1943. See also my essay, "Looking Good: Nature and Nobility," in *Toward a More Natural Science: Biology and Human Affairs* (1985).

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by their brother Ham's disclosure (if not by the fact of his retailing it). Quite likely, they had never before seen or known their father to be humbled or even at a loss. Upon the sea of troubles, Noah had commanded an entire microcosm and presided over it with full authority. And Noah had been granted a special relationship to God. Could Ham's tale really be true? What should a son do on hearing report of Father's disgrace? Should he go and see for himself? Should he ignore the knowledge, preferring disbelief? Or should he act benevolently, while remaining in the dark about the truth?

Shem and Japheth rise to the occasion. They choose the latter course:

> And Shem and Japheth took an outer cloak, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness [9:23].

No sooner told, Shem and Japheth move to act in their father's defense. Rather than join in Ham's shameful boast, they reverently cover their father's nakedness. Walking backward, together, they gently deposit a draping cloak from off their shoulders; deliberately, they see nothing. They refuse to share in their father's shame; indeed, they cover it up.

We readers are touched by this display of loyalty and filial piety. The decency and respect of Shem and Japheth are immediately winning. Even more do we admire the perfect way they found delicately to correct the problem without participating in it: they did not first look and only then cover. The deed was elegantly just-right to the occasion.

But in our own admiration we should not overlook the stark implication: their piety *is* a kind of (willing) blindness. They knowingly choose to live leaving some things in the dark, without pressing back to the naked truth about temporal beginnings or ultimate origins. They embrace authority and, implicitly, life under law.

WHEN he discovers his disgrace, Noah does not take his shame lying down. Angrily, he retaliates:

> And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done unto him. And he said: "Cursed be Canaan: A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" [9:24-25].

Noah's anger is surely expected, as rage is the usual response to being shamed. A man who is put to shame harbors a hatred keener than any other, largely because the observer compels him to confront himself in his own meanness and ugliness. Witnesses establish our own disgrace beyond our power of forgetting and remembering. And the horror of it all is magnified many times over when disgrace is witnessed by those we love, and, perhaps worst of all, by our children.

But certain features of Noah's discovery and reaction are surprising. How did Noah know who had done what, especially if we are right and nothing in fact was *done* by Ham, other than "looking"? Awakening, Noah must have found himself covered with the outer cloak and inferred the rest: those who covered him were not those who first saw him; and, knowing his sons, Noah knew which was which. Ham, the hot one (in this respect, too, he is like the tyrannical Oedipus, whose ruling passion was anger), had no doubt given earlier indications of disrespect and anger. But in his own anger, Noah retaliated not by cursing Ham but by cursing Canaan. This requires explanation.

A little reflection shows the fitness of Noah's response. Measure for measure, Noah "unfathers" Ham by driving a wedge between him and his (youngest) son Canaan. Should the curse be effective, Canaan (whose name is from a root meaning "to be low") will blame his own misfortunes on his father's misdeed, precisely in the matter of filial piety. Ham, who seeks to free himself from parental authority and law, will be held responsible *by his son*—as a parental authority—for the evils that befall that son. Moreover, the precise evil to be suffered by Ham's descendants is also fitting: those who would live without law (or parental authority) are destined to live under slavery; those who deny covenant are bound to accept the rule of the stronger—precisely what the rule of law was first instituted to prevent.

But, however fitting, is it just to visit the sins of the fathers upon the sons? How could this be fair to Canaan, who himself did (or saw) nothing?[6] This is a vexed question; yet it takes us to the heart of the matter regarding fathers and sons.

It may or may not be just, but it is almost inevitable that children suffer from the deeds of their fathers, and not because some willful or punitive God intervenes to guarantee it. On the contrary, the deeds and beliefs of the fathers shape the sons—whether by conformity or by rebellion—just as they shape the world that the sons will inherit. What kind of sons would a father like Ham be likely to rear? If they follow his example, they will not heed his or any other authority; thus, like him, they become antinomian. If they rebel, they might come to wish for some orderly alternative, but they will not be able themselves to supply what has been destroyed. (Consider in this connection the sorts of children spawned today by

[6] There is a line of interpretation that, in order to make sense of the curse on Canaan, attributes the deed to him instead of or in addition to his father Ham. Accordingly, these interpreters read *b'no hakatan*, his youngest son, as grandson, like the French *petit fils*. But this has no other warrant from the text. Rather than assuming Noah's response to be simply righteous, the reader would be better off pondering the rights and wrongs of cursing Canaan *as the son* of the (one) guilty party, Ham.

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our most permissive or rebellious parents—the radicals, the hippies, or even the ones who want to be merely pals with their kids. The children who follow their parents perpetuate the disorder: the ones who turn away—absent some fortuitous educational encounter—become likely recruits for the Reverend Moon or one of our New Age "religions.")

A CURSE is not exactly a punishment. It may simply be the unavoidable consequence of some unsavory or reprehensible experience. Having seen what he should not have seen, Ham cannot escape into blindness. He is cursed to have that experience permanently with him, and the memory of it will color everything he does and feels—including how he is with his own sons. Noah's remark may be seen less as causing than as prophesying—with righteously indignant satisfaction—that "Canaan [will] be cursed."

Yet Noah's act is not altogether kosher. It partakes of the terrible problem of administering punishment to your own. One cannot cleanse pollution of the nest caused by one of the nestlings without further befouling it. (This is the classic tragedy of the House of Atreus.) And when the innocent are made to suffer with the guilty, there is ground for later hatred and revenge. Will not some descendants of Canaan later punish the line of Shem? Will not Noah's angry (partial) "misdeed" on the innocent Canaan come back to haunt the (equally innocent) sons of Shem? And, leaving later consequences aside, is there not something wrong with calling down a curse on young Canaan, even if it is—as I have argued—an absolutely perfect response to his father's misconduct?

A later biblical echo of the present story confirms our criticism of Noah's response. In Leviticus 18, the law proscribing forbidden sexual unions and unchastity is promulgated, beginning with the injunction, "After the doings of the Land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I shall bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their statutes" (18:3). There soon follow fourteen verses (6-19) detailing those forbidden unions—each verse proscribing "uncovering of nakedness"—which, we assume, were common practices among the Egyptians and the Canaanites, people descended from Ham, the first uncoverer of nakedness. The list of sexual misconduct is interrupted by a stark prohibition regarding child sacrifice: "And thou shalt not give any of thy seed to set them apart to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord" (18:21). Could this be a belated gloss on Noah's willingness to "sacrifice" his grandson, Canaan, to Molech—simply to avenge his own son's misconduct—and, worse, to avoid accepting responsibility for his having disgraced himself in the first place? Did not Noah, by his fierce act of revenge, join in the "Canaanite" ethos that he was cursing? Let us generalize the question: may we fathers ever be forgiven for wishing that our grandsons pay back our sons with in-kind rebellion and disrespect—especially when we have not comported ourselves respectfully and reverently?

Difficult children are often difficult especially with regard to our shortcomings: holding themselves as partial outsiders, they see more and are not ashamed to speak up. They criticize our ways, try our patience, challenge our wisdom, and test our virtue. The more able or spirited they are, the more trouble they can cause. Moreover, contrary sons are born even to thoroughly decent and righteous fathers, who—if they are to remain righteous—do not therefore excuse themselves from the paternal task. On the contrary, it is the difficult sons who often teach us—painfully—just why and how the paternal work must be done, even against the odds, and not least because they are frequently more interesting and promising than their more dutiful brothers.

NOAH follows his curse with a blessing. This speech—together with the curse on Canaan—is the first directly quoted human speech after the Flood, and divides the human race into cursed and blessed portions.[7] It is also Noah's last reported "deed"; his death at age 950 years—350 of which were after the Flood—will be reported in the very next verses (9:28-29). The blessing itself is remarkable:

> And he said, "Blessed be the Lord [YHWH], the God of Shem; and let Canaan be their servant. God enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be their servant" [9:26-27].

Rather than bless Shem, Noah blesses YHWH, the God of Shem. According to Cassuto, the formula "blessed be YHWH" "connotes thanksgiving and praise to the Lord who performed a beneficent act." He interprets the present verse to mean: "Thanksgiving and praise be to YHWH who guided Shem in the good way and taught him to conduct himself with decency and all other virtues."

But how exactly did the Lord guide Shem? Overt intervention did not take place, as far as we know; and Noah, in drunken stupor, could only be guessing. Yet it turns out that Noah speaks truly, and better than he knows. Noah divined that Shem's conduct was inspired by pious reverence, not only for him, but also and especially for the divine. Shem had managed to see—however

[7] The division is Noah's, not God's. God's "division" begins with the call of Abraham; it seeks, through the call of one people who are enjoined to seek holiness, to spread righteousness and holiness among all the nations.

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dimly—in the authoritative relation of father and son an image of the relation of God and man, and, therewith, a pathway to the holy. As the stance of Ham points downward to Canaanite paganism, so the stance of Shem points upward to the sacred.

Shem, who seems to have initiated the move to cover his father's nakedness, and his older brother Japheth turn out to be more pious than their father—though they probably learned their lesson largely from him. The formative experience in their lives would certainly have been the Flood and the building of the ark. They could not help being impressed by their father who, without raising a question or uttering a sound, obeyed God's shipbuilding instructions to the letter. And when God spoke directly to them in making His covenant (9:8), they experienced personally the God who cares for man and to whom the fatherly human being points.

Common experiences are not, however, necessarily experienced in common. Different sons, different dispositions. Shem, he the man of the name and the progenitor of Abraham, is most closely connected with holiness. Japheth, the enlarged or beautiful one, must dwell under the protection of holiness ("in the tents of Shem"). But Ham—for reasons unknown—marches to a different drummer, deaf to the voice of authority and the divine call. The case of Ham clearly shows us the insufficiency of relying on nature (or family) alone to ensure decency and to guarantee the transmission of righteous ways.

Modern times have produced a third human type—neither tyrant nor philosopher—who is also deaf to authority and who knows neither awe nor reverence: democratic man. For him, all hierarchy is suspect, all distinctions odious, all claims on his modesty or respect confining. Last names, and even familial titles like Uncle or Aunt, are much too formal. Honor and respect, fear and awe, and filial piety seem increasingly vestiges of an archaic world. Sex, utterly demystified, is now sport and chatter; nakedness is no big deal. Severed now from their source in what is truly venerable, the customs of respect and modesty become anemic; increasingly petrified, they crumble beneath the avalanche of equality, explicitness, and the "right to be myself." We are all pals now. But we should not be self-deceived. The sins of unfatherly fathers are still being visited on the sons. Canaan will still—and again—be cursed to live like a pagan. If you need a monument, just look around.

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Are Girls Shortchanged in School?

Rita Kramer

In America today, more girls graduate from high school than boys and more of them go on to college, where they make up 55 percent of the total enrollment. Yet according to a report recently released by the American Association of University Women (AAUW), "girls are invisible" in classrooms which "day in, day out, deliver the message that women's lives count for less than men's."

This report, *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, has been enthusiastically greeted by the media. With almost no attempt to evaluate the evidence on which it purports to be based, front-page articles in most of the nation's leading newspapers have simply passed on the report's conclusions: that standardized tests are biased against girls; that curricula and textbooks ignore or stereotype women; that teachers demonstrate bias by paying less attention to girls; and that because of discrimination girls lag behind boys in math and science and tend not to pursue careers in those fields.

All these charges are either false or misleading. And no wonder, since *How Schools Shortchange Girls* is based on a body of research some of which is outdated, much of which is trivial (unpublished doctoral dissertations and obscure publications), and some of which was done under the auspices of the organization issuing the report—a little like quoting yourself as an authority for your own opinions. The report ignores any published evidence—of which there is quite a bit—that does not support its conclusions and overlooks any inconvenient facts that contradict or even tend to modify those conclusions or suggest explanations other than bias for any statistical discrepancy in favor of boys (though not when the numbers favor girls).

Take, for example, the charge that the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is biased against girls. True, girls do somewhat less well than boys on the SAT, which is used to help determine admission to college; it is also true that girls get higher grades in college than boys. Since the SAT thus "underpredicts" the performance of girls in college, it must, says the AAUW report, be biased against them. But this could just as well be turned around and used as evidence that boys are the victims of grading bias. After all, scholars not quoted in the report have pointed out that girls tend to take more courses in which grading is easier (art, music, literature), and which involve the verbal skills in which girls do better, than the tougher math and science courses more boys tend to take.

The charge that textbooks are biased against women is even more bizarre. Thus, a quantitative analysis of the content of three leading high-school texts in American history carried out at the Center for the Study of Social and Political Change at Smith College (and not cited by the AAUW report) found that women are portrayed more favorably than men; that there are proportionately more pictures of women, largely in untraditional roles; that even minor achievements by women are given extensive treatment compared to the achievements of men; that women are never represented unflatteringly, although men may be; that most accounts of historical events such as wars are considered primarily in terms of the contributions made by women (and minorities).

Students who read nothing but these textbooks (and that means most students in American high schools) wind up knowing more about minor female characters in the American past than about men who have had a significant influence on world and national affairs. The 1987 National Assessment of Educational Progress test of history and literature found that more high-school students could identify Harriet Tubman than Winston Churchill or Joseph Stalin and more knew that the Seneca Falls Declaration concerned women's rights than when Lincoln was President. In *American Voices*, a new Scott, Foresman entry into the lucrative textbook market, the index entries under "Women" and "Women's" are more than twice as long as those under World War I and World War II together.

As for the observation that teachers pay more attention to boys, this is one of those ambiguous findings that the authors of the AAUW report automatically ascribe to bias. It has long been common knowledge that boys are more aggressive and harder to control in the traditional classroom. Calling on them more frequently may be a strategy for keeping them in line, focusing them on the academic task at hand. But even so, there is no evidence to indicate that this kind of attention translates into their learning more, earning better grades, or getting into college more easily (which, as we have seen, they do not).

Nor is there any evidence that, as the AAUW report charges, girls "are systematically discouraged from" and "are being steered away from" science, mathematics, and technology. The report—ignoring the possibility that biological, developmental, or cultural factors may well have something to do with the relative disinclination of girls to study these subjects—once again simply assumes that bias is at work. Accordingly, it suggests special programs for girls in math and science.

But encouraging girls to go into previously avoided fields, and then

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to work hard at excelling in them, is not exactly what the authors of the AAUW report have in mind here. We get some notion of what they do have in mind from a talk given by one of them, Dr. Peggy McIntosh, an associate director at the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, to teachers in Brookline, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1990.

McIntosh begins by describing a little girl who is unable to solve the problems on a worksheet that asks her to add a series of three numbers such as 1+3+5. McIntosh objects to the assignment as an example of "the right/wrong, win/lose/kill or be killed system" that defines learning as mastery—"vertical thinking," as she calls it.

Vertical thinking involves "competition, exact thinking, decisiveness, being able to make an argument that will persuade others or to turn in the perfect paper." To avoid such evils, McIntosh recommends revising the assignment in terms of "lateral thinking," which instead of asking, "How am I doing?" asks, "What is it to be alive?" One way of doing this is just to give the child the answers. Another is to let the children solve all problems in a group. (Incidentally, McIntosh's program for curricular innovation involves putting "not just math, but biology and chemistry off the right/wrong axis.")

THE AAUW report, then, reflects the increasingly widespread attitude in American life that sees everything in terms of bias and group entitlements and ignores all the subtle and complex aspects of human nature that differentiate individuals—including women—from one another. As usual, the bottom line is a call for remedial legislation—in this case for a reactivation of the Women's Educational Equity Act Program (WEEAP).

It was under WEEAP that federal funding was made available in 1974 for the development of "nonsexist" textbooks and other curricular materials. But since the Department of Education's publication in 1983 of the report of the National Committee on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, programs for school reform have concentrated on issues other than gender bias—most notably on why American children of both sexes do so poorly on all measures of academic ability compared to children in other countries, whom they manage to outdo only on measures of self-esteem. Under the present Secretary, Lamar Alexander, the focus of the Department of Education is on raising academic standards throughout the system from kindergarten to college. Along the way, requests for continued funding for WEEAP have been dropped.

It is this process that the AAUW seeks to reverse by persuading us that the problem with our schools is gender bias rather than a bias against academic achievement. But sharing this latter bias to the full, the AAUW report could not be expected to fight it. And indeed, accepting its shoddy analysis and carrying out the predictably anti-intellectual recommendations that follow from it would only make our schools worse—for girls and boys alike.

How to Read "Crime and Punishment"

Gary Saul Morson

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY'S *Crime and Punishment* (1866) is above all a novel of ideas, and in its pages one reads about people who profess the philosophical obsessions of their time. In the characteristic manner of Russian literature, Dostoevsky focuses on the intelligentsia, its habits of thought, its delusions of insight, and its self-image of superiority to the rest of society. This novel, indeed, became a central text in the Russian debate about the intelligentsia's pretensions, and therefore came to speak to later generations as if it had just been published.

In fact, whenever an intelligentsia yields to a belief in its special mission to save society, Dostoevsky's criticisms achieve renewed relevance. Although his examples are Russian, his lessons are pertinent to many other cultures, including our own. And that is reason enough to welcome two new English versions of *Crime and Punishment*, one by David McDuff* and the other by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky**—although, as I shall try to show later on, neither one measures up to the classic rendition of the novel by Constance Garnett.

"INTELLIGENTSIA" is a word we get from Russian, where in the 19th century it meant something different from just the educated classes. An *intelligent* (member of the intelligentsia) was identified as such by his sense of solidarity with that group and by his contempt for all others, who were regarded either as enemies of the people or as benighted objects to be saved even against their will. *Intelligenty* were expected to live a particular kind of life—with the fastidiousness of

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** Knopf, 564 pp., $25.00.

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the politically correct, they cultivated bad manners of a certain sort—and, above all, to share a set of approved ideas. Almost by definition, an *intelligent* believed in atheism (itself a sort of faith in Russia), socialism, and materialism. Somehow or other, from this materialist denial of all moral norms the intelligentsia managed to derive ethical urgency. As the philosopher Vladimir Soloviev quipped, the intelligentsia appeared to live according to an illogical syllogism: "Man has descended from the apes; *therefore* we should sacrifice ourselves for our fellow man."

Dostoevsky also stressed the tendency of the intelligentsia to transform everything into ideology and to take all ideas to a fanatical extreme; a Russian *intelligent*, he commented, is someone who can read Darwin on the survival of the fittest and promptly resolve to become a pickpocket. It need hardly be added that even petty theft could be justified as a contribution to the salvation of the people.

What was most important to the intelligentsia mentality was a mystique of revolution, specifically, revolution inspired and led by the intelligentsia itself. Members of the intelligentsia therefore held fast to a faith in two tenets: first, that they possessed or would soon find the underlying laws of history and civilization; and second, that by violent activity in accordance with those laws they could eliminate absolutely every evil from the world forever. A young man or woman who had never read a book but who accepted these revolutionary ideas, lived a properly sordid life, and belonged to an intelligentsia "circle" would be accepted as an *intelligent* much more readily than an intellectual like, let us say, Leo Tolstoy, who used his title of "Count," never conformed to reigning intellectual pieties, and lived on his estate, supremely disdainful of all those scribblers in the capital. Tolstoy in fact emerged as the key figure in a Russian countertradition, which answered the intelligentsia by developing an anti-ideological perspective that might be called "prosaics."

As it happened, this countertradition included most of Russia's greatest writers. The critic Mikhail Gershenzon did not much exaggerate when he observed that "in Russia an almost infallible gauge of an artist's genius is the extent of his hatred for the intelligentsia." Tolstoy's *War and Peace* became an exemplary text of the countertradition. That book repeatedly insists that there can be no viable "theory" of history and that people who act as if there were knowable historical laws rapidly become ineffective at everything except petty tyranny. For Tolstoy, history, like everything else in life, is shaped not primarily by dramatic events or noticeable crises but by the countless small events of daily life.

Anton Chekhov, too, was if anything even more devoted to the prosaic and even more contemptuous of "high drama" than Tolstoy. He expressed utter contempt for

> the indolent, lazily philosophizing cold [member of the] intelligentsia . . . who is not patriotic . . . who grumbles and negates everything, since for an idle mind it is easier to negate than affirm; who does not marry and refuses to educate his children. A flabby soul, flabby muscles, a lack of movement, inconsistent ideas—and all this on the strength of the fact that life has no meaning . . . and that money is an evil.

As for Dostoevsky, his position in the debate turned out to be remarkably complex. Himself a former radical who had been sentenced to mock-execution, a labor camp, and Siberian exile for his youthful political activities, Dostoevsky eventually became the great scourge of the intelligentsia. His novels chronicle the horror produced by this "vaudeville of demons," to use a phrase from *The Possessed* (a title more accurately rendered as *The Demons*). That novel catalogues the varieties of intelligentsia madness, and at least one of its characters, Shigalev, has earned Dostoevsky the reputation of prophet for his uncanny understanding of the totalitarianism that in Russia would eventually seize power.

For Dostoevsky, nothing leads to greater evil than schemes to end evil once and for all. And yet he himself was drawn to such schemes. He seemed to oscillate between opposite responses to the intelligentsia. At times, he rejected ideology altogether and, like Tolstoy and Chekhov, turned to the prosaic virtues. But at other times, he argued that the intelligentsia was right in its yearnings for the millennium; it had simply put its faith in the wrong source of salvation. The answer was to be found not in materialism but in religion, not in populist or Marxist socialism but in what Dostoevsky called the "Christian socialism" of Russian Orthodoxy.

In his most "possessed" writings, Dostoevsky asserted—quite literally—that he had ascertained the date at which the world would come to an end and the Kingdom of God would be established on earth. His insight as an artist had, he wrote, allowed him to see the inner workings of Providence and to read the plot of history as he could read the plot of a novel. These prophecies—they were not just predictions—occur in *The Diary of a Writer*, which contains article after article devoted to explaining world politics in terms of the biblical Book of Revelation. In its Russian Orthodox version, this kind of thinking led straight to fanatical anti-Semitism, and indeed Dostoevsky's truly horrifying anti-Semitic writings date from this period of his life.

In earlier passages of *The Diary of a Writer*, however, Dostoevsky rejects millenarian thinking in favor of a prosaic viewpoint. Insisting on the need for skepticism, he mocks both the intelligentsia's habit of discovering "laws" of history and its pretensions to save mankind "at a stroke." In one memorable passage, Dostoevsky contrasts grandiose plans to liberate all humanity with the efforts of a certain "humble and little fellow" who spent a lifetime saving money so that, every ten years, he could buy the freedom of a single serf. By the end of his life, Dostoevsky reports, this unknown man had liberated three or four people. Dostoevsky then imagines the sarcasm that *intelligenty* would direct at such a quixotic project; but he insists that

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it is just such "microscopic efforts" that do the most good and constitute the greatest heroism.

When his prophecy of the End failed, Dostoevsky returned to this prosaic standpoint. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, his last novel, the wise elder Zossima tells the story of a man who fabricates "enthusiastic schemes for the service of humanity" but cannot share a room with someone for two days without hating him. And yet, this man concludes, "it has always happened that the more I detest men individually the more ardent becomes my love for humanity [in general]." Zossima instructs that real love must be for real, individual people.

LIKE Dostoevsky's thought as a whole, *Crime and Punishment* seems torn between these two competing alternatives to the mentality of the intelligentsia. It is almost as if there were two novels here, sharing a diagnosis but prescribing incompatible cures.

Crime and Punishment clearly offers an analysis, if not an etiology, of the intelligentsia's sick mentality, as the novel's original reviewers recognized. The novel's hero, Raskolnikov ("the schismatic"), "had entirely given up attending to his daily affairs and did not want to attend to them." He has ceased earning money as a tutor, refuses to worry about such "commonplace trifles" as paying his rent, and does nothing but lie on his threadbare couch or aimlessly wander the streets. "To become more degraded and slovenly would have been difficult; but Raskolnikov even enjoyed it in his present state of mind." People who see this self-absorbed youth on the street take him to be drunk.

In a letter to his publisher, Dostoevsky explained that his hero had succumbed to "an infirmity of notions . . . under the influence of those strange, 'incomplete' ideas which go floating about in the air." The more Raskolnikov neglects his daily affairs, the greater the hold those ideas have on him. Yet these "incomplete" theories contradict each other, and later, when Raskolnikov tries to explain to himself and others what has guided his behavior, he recognizes that none of them suffices. Nevertheless, they all converge on a single action: murdering an old woman, a pawnbroker.

One of Raskolnikov's theories demands this murder on moral grounds. Kill her and give her money to the poor; "one death for hundreds of lives—it's simple arithmetic!" Another theory denies the existence of morality altogether. Good and evil are simply prejudices, "artificial terrors" inherited from religion, which means that, for the man who truly dares to transgress, "all is permitted." Indeed, Raskolnikov imagines that all the great men of history, from Solon to Napoleon, acted on precisely this principle, which justifies any crime if for no other reason than that there is no such thing as crime.

What is remarkable about the "Napoleonic" theory is that it distills the intelligentsia mentality to its pure form. Usually terrorists and revolutionaries assert that their theories and actions will save humanity, and *therefore* that the intelligentsia is society's vanguard. The middle step of the argument, the aspiration to rectify social evil, is what justifies the claim to superiority over ordinary people. Raskolnikov is honest enough to do away with this middle step and go directly to the claim of superiority, which is the constant element preserved through all ideological fashions.

And yet, even this theory does not explain why Raskolnikov commits his crime. Later he admits that he always knew he was not a Napoleon, that he was not one of the geniuses with "the right to transgress." Can one imagine Napoleon groping with shaking hands under an old woman's bed while terrified at the sight of her blood?, he asks himself. Can one even imagine Napoleon first needing to invent a theory before doing what he had to do? No, a true Napoleon would have killed "without casuistry."

In that case, what *is* Raskolnikov's motive? This question perplexes him almost from the moment he commits the murder, and he never resolves it. Apparently, Dostoevsky also remained uncertain, and his notebooks record his own quest for a motive, which seems to parallel his hero's. Dostoevsky recognized that the portrait of Raskolnikov was true—his keen psychological sense told him that—but he did not know why. Critics from then until now have remained just as convinced of the book's psychological accuracy and just as unconvincing in identifying Raskolnikov's underlying motive.

AS IT happens, the most persuasive answer has come not from a professional critic but from Leo Tolstoy. In Tolstoy's view, there is no "underlying motive" for Raskolnikov's crime, no single moment in which he "decides" on murder. Rather, the crime emerges from the climate of Raskolnikov's mind, which is itself the product of countless small decisions made at many ordinary moments. Tolstoy alludes to several passages in which the novel tells us that although Raskolnikov constantly teases himself with the possibility of murder, "never for a single moment during the whole time could he believe in the feasibility of his designs." Raskolnikov talks to himself, lies on his couch daydreaming, or toys with some odd detail of his scheme, but he neither chooses nor ever renounces his terrible plan.

Tolstoy regards passages like these as fully revealing. The idea of murder is never anything but a dream for Raskolnikov, a mere possibility, even when he stands before the old woman, ax in hand. That is why he never actively prepares himself for the crime, only doing the bare minimum to prove to himself that he has not repudiated it. But when a unique opportunity arises, that "minimum" turns out to be quite enough for the dream to become reality. It leads him to the murder scene, where he must act even without actually having made a decision to act.

In Tolstoy's view, this is precisely how important decisions are often "made." It is not a single moment, but the whole way Raskolnikov thinks and lives, what Tolstoy calls his "true life," that ends in murder:

> That question was decided . . . when he was doing nothing, and was only thinking, when only his

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> consciousness was active: and in that consciousness tiny, tiny alterations were taking place. . . . Tiny, tiny alterations—but on them depend the most immense and terrible consequences.

Not grand events, but those "tiny, tiny alterations," are what make a life good or bad. Tolstoy's own novels focus on such "tiny, tiny alterations," into which he divides even the simplest and most apparently indivisible actions. (That is one reason his books are so long.)

In those restless hours when Raskolnikov is torn between renouncing and yielding to his murderous plan, he is amazed to find himself going to his friend Razumikhin. Like the simple decent maid Nastasya, who brings food to Raskolnikov at her own expense, Razumikhin conveys cheerfulness and sociability; he is never discouraged by setbacks, and, though poor, is resourceful at getting odd jobs. Throughout the novel, he also serves as Dostoevsky's mouthpiece for criticizing all grand theorizing, as he insists on the messiness of history and the need for individual responsibility in an uncertain world. He directs his sarcasm toward all attempts to gain a fortune or solve social problems without steady, persistent effort, and mocks the idea that "a social system, coming out of some mathematical head, will at once organize the whole of mankind and instantly make it righteous and sinless, sooner than any living process." Going to Razumikhin thus indicates a desire to escape from the mentality leading to crime, and in the novel as a whole, Razumikhin—his name means "the reasonable one"—most clearly carries the prosaic idea.

If Nastasya and Razumikhin speak prosaic truths, one character, the detective Porfiry Petrovich, actually seems to have read Tolstoy. As it happens, *Crime and Punishment* and *War and Peace* were being serialized in the same "thick journal" at the same time—such was the intensity of literary creativity in Russia in the 1860's and 1870's—and so an interesting dialogue between the two great novels became possible. Most obviously, both seem engaged in a debate about "the idea of Napoleon." Thus, explaining to Raskolnikov why he does not follow established police procedure, Porfiry Petrovich claims that procedures, like theories, are made only for the idealized situation, whereas "every crime as soon as it actually occurs turns into a completely particular case, unlike all the previous ones." As an example, Porfiry adduces

> the former Austrian *Hofkriegrat*. . . . On paper, they had Napoleon crushed and taken prisoner, it was all worked out and arranged in the cleverest manner in their study, and then, lo and behold, General Mack surrenders with his entire army!

Porfiry doubtless derived this striking example from a recently published section of *War and Peace*, where it illustrates that there can be no science of war (or history) because an infinitude of contingencies, choices, and "tiny alterations" of circumstance render each military or historical situation irreducibly particular. Tolstoy's wisest general, Kutuzov, understands it is not advance strategies but attentiveness to the flux of unforeseeable particularities that makes the difference; and Dostoevsky's detective applies this lesson to civilian life. He makes himself into the Kutuzov of crime.

UNTIL well into *Crime and Punishment*, then, prosaic attentiveness and responsibility oppose the abstraction and megalomania of the intelligentsia. But for temperamental reasons, Dostoevsky apparently grew dissatisfied with the prosaic answer. Without revising the novel as a whole, he added a second alternative, the Christian myth. He changed Sonia, the prostitute who reads the Gospel to Raskolnikov and eventually follows him to Siberia, from the realistic and partly flawed person she was in his notebooks to the pure and perfectly Christian symbol of wisdom—as the diminutive of Sophia, the name Sonia means "wisdom"—she became in the published version. This violation of the realistic tenor of the novel was evidently quite deliberate, but readers have nonetheless often deemed it a flaw.

Readers have been still more disturbed by the novel's epilogue, in which Raskolnikov is at last converted from Napoleon to Sonia, from ideology to wisdom. The epilogue completely abandons the realistic tenor of the work, and we enter mythic, if not biblical, time. Raskolnikov finds faith while contemplating nomads on an eternal landscape where "time itself seemed to stop, as if the centuries of Abraham and his flock had not passed." No meticulously detailed psychological process accounts for his conversion; a mythic dream, and an implicit appeal to the reader's own longing for faith, bring the novel to its Christian close.

Summoned as it were by professional duty, generations of scholars have identified numerous connections between the epilogue and the rest of the novel. But the very need for such a persistent defense testifies to the dissatisfaction readers usually feel. Most have agreed with Philip Rahv, who described Sonia's "answer" and the novel's epilogue as "implausible and out of key with the work as a whole."

The problem, I think, is not that a Christian solution could not have been made to work aesthetically, but that the novel never reconciles its prosaic and its mythic impulses. The result is a confusion of two designs. Or we might put it this way: the author's final intention conflicts with what might be called the *energy* of the work as it unfolds. Sensing the prosaic energy that drives the novel forward, the reader feels cheated by an intention that does not seem to emerge from the whole. The indisputable fact that *Crime and Punishment* is still one of the world's greatest masterpieces testifies to the amazing power of Dostoevsky's conflicted genius.

MOST American readers first encounter Russian fiction in Constance Garnett's classic renditions. In the first decades of this century, Garnett translated almost the entire canon of great Russian prose, and her versions remain the ones for aspiring translators to beat. Few have done so, and only Ann Dunnigan, who has produced three volumes of Chekhov, a brilliant *War and Peace*, and several other

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classics, has done so consistently.

Nevertheless, it has become fashionable among Russian scholars to look down on Garnett's efforts. Her errors have been duly catalogued and deplored, and her virtues taken for granted. Yet when scholars prefer a more recent and perhaps more accurate rendition, they are unwittingly specifying something to supplement rather than to replace Garnett. In most cases, unless one knows the novel either in the original Russian or in Garnett's English, one may never discover that special excitement that has given Russian literature its aura of unspeakable brilliance.

Garnett's strengths and weaknesses derive from her purpose of making Russian novels into masterpieces in English. Because at the time she worked so little was known about Russian culture, she simply left out numerous topical references (thus, when a character in *Crime and Punishment* refers to the radical critics Belinsky and Dobroliubov, Garnett omits the sentence entirely). She softened colloquialisms and slang, produced proper syntax even when a character or narrator is decidedly awkward, and, occasionally, missed small but telling details. Errors of this kind are corrected in the new versions of *Crime and Punishment* by David McDuff and by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky—but both fail in other respects.

WHEN one embarks on translating a classic that has been rendered many times before, one should have a well-formed reason to serve as a guide in making choices. David McDuff seems to have no reason except to produce yet another translation. His work is competent but uninspired; his sentences generally accurate but, on the whole, flaccid. On the other hand, he has written a fine introduction, which sets the novel in its cultural context and offers some sensible intuitions for interpreting it. Like Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, he has also supplied a helpful set of notes, which draw on the apparatus to the recently completed Soviet edition of Dostoevsky's complete works.

In contrast to McDuff, Pevear and Volokhonsky have a very definite idea of what they are doing. They want to capture all those colloquialisms, slang expressions, and low tonalities that Garnett smoothed out. Generally speaking, they succeed quite well. To take a single example: the profligate Svidrigailov, one of Raskolnikov's many doubles, shoots himself in the head in front of a Jewish fireman wearing an "Achilles helmet." The Jew, whose "face bore that expression of eternal, grumbling sorrow that is so sourly imprinted upon all faces of the Jewish tribe without exception," absurdly explains in his heavy Yiddish accent that suicide is not permitted in such a locale. Pevear and Volokhonsky are in their element:

> "Zo vat's dis, a choke? It's de wrong place! . . . Oi, dat's not allowed, it's de wrong place!" Achilles roused himself, his pupils widening more and more. Svidrigailov pulled the trigger.

This version captures the malicious humor of Dostoevsky's grotesque scene.

But Pevear and Volokhonsky fail at producing equivalents of normal literate Russian prose, which is, after all, most of the novel. Although this team consists of one person whose native language is Russian and another whose native language is English—a promising combination—the English-speaker seems to have a tin ear for his own language. At one point, Raskolnikov is so alienated from humanity that even if he were in a room with his "most intimate friends" (as I would render the phrase), he would feel just as distant. Garnett gives us "those nearest and dearest to him," which is good, and McDuff, "his dearest and most cherished friends," which is acceptable. Pevear and Volokhonsky, evidently guided by the morphology of the Russian word *perveishie* (the superlative of first), produce the senseless "foremost friends," thereby turning intimacy into status.

Another example: in Raskolnikov's room, visitors feel *zhutko*—a word that has no exact English equivalent, but which conveys oppressiveness, eeriness, perhaps even terror. Garnett renders the word "ill at ease," which is too soft; McDuff's "claustrophobic" misses the tonality of strangeness. Pevear and Volokhonsky choose "creepy," which is good semantically, but wrong in every other respect. They seem not to understand that the word "creepy" belongs to "kidspeak" and that its effect is jarring. Such insensitivity makes reading their version an irritating experience.

They are still worse when Dostoevsky invokes poetic or biblical language. In one of the most memorable scenes of the novel, the drunkard Marmeladov imagines how he and others like him will be summoned before God's Last Judgment to receive forgiveness. Garnett brilliantly captures the unexpected poetry and liturgical cadences that ring through the tavern. Her version sings:

> He will say, "Come forth ye drunkards, come forth, ye weak ones, come forth, ye children of shame!" . . . And He will say unto us, "Ye are swine, made in the Image of the Beast, and with his mark; but come ye also!" And the wise ones and those of understanding will say, "Oh Lord, why dost Thou receive these men?" And He will say, "This is why I receive them, oh ye wise, this is why I receive them, oh ye of understanding, that not one of them believed himself to be worthy of this."

Pevear and Volokonsky flatten the passage:

> He will say, "Come forth, my drunk ones, my weak ones, my shameless ones!" . . . And he will say: "Swine you are! Of the image of the beast and of his seal; but come, you, too!" And the wise and the reasonable will say unto Him, "Lord, why do you receive such as these?" And He will say, "I receive them, my wise and reasonable ones, forasmuch as not one of them considered himself worthy of this thing."

McDuff's version is halfway between the two.

On the whole, Pevear and Volokhonsky excel at capturing the frenetic and colloquial Dostoevsky, Garnett at conveying the work's prosaic (or novelistic) and poetic (or mythic) qualities. Garnett is therefore the one for a first reading, Pevear and Volokhonsky for a second.

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America and the World

THE IMPERIAL TEMPTATION. By ROBERT W. TUCKER AND DAVID C. HENDRICKSON. *Council on Foreign Relations Press. 228 pp. $22.50.*

Reviewed by ELLIOTT ABRAMS

"THE United States could not remain on the margin of universal history, but did not know how to participate fully or determine what its role therein should be." Thus, the late French political philosopher Raymond Aron writing about the period before World War I. Even in 1900 this was an old subject of debate; it has emerged again with vehemence after the collapse of Soviet power and the Gulf War.

The central issue was, and still is, how deeply America should become involved in foreign squabbles. In the late 18th and 19th centuries a "Jeffersonian" school saw the nation as, in Jefferson's own words, principally "a standing monument and example." This position reflected American weakness in the face of the European empires; disgust with European princes and their endless wars; and a real doubt that democracy could ever spread beyond American shores. Toward the end of his life, Jefferson wrote that "whether the state of society in Europe can bear a republican government I doubted . . . and I [still] do now."

The Jeffersonian view held sway until World War I, permeating the Progressive movement in the early decades of this century. According to this view, America had a "unique mission . . . to purify and offer herself to decadent Europe, an example of democracy triumphant over social and economic injustice" (in the words of Woodrow Wilson's biographer, Arthur Link). But from the moment in 1917 when the first doughboys rolled into France, America became a world power and has remained one. During two world wars and the long cold war—which included such hot wars as Korea and Vietnam—we were transformed into a colossus in world politics, replete with entangling alliances, foreign bases, and a huge military establishment.

Now our major long-term enemies are defeated, the United States stands as the world's most powerful country, and the spread of democracy has been startling. In these new circumstances, should we revert to the "original understanding" of America's best role? Should we pull back from world power and once again seek influence by example? And if we do not, will our preeminence tempt us into a new imperialism that betrays our interests and our best traditions?

Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, co-authors of two previous works in American history, announce their own position with their title. *The Imperial Temptation* focuses on contemporary events—principally the Gulf War and its lessons—and the view it takes is a grim one. Americans, the authors write, have adopted "institutions and governing practices they had previously identified with despotic governments," and "the nation has assumed many of the very traits that it was founded to escape." There has been a "betrayal" of the vision of the Founding Fathers, a betrayal so deep that it "prefigures . . . the end of American history" as a unique phenomenon in the history of nations.

For Tucker and Hendrickson, American "pretensions" to create a new world order took us into a conflict in the Gulf that could have been avoided by a simple embargo of Iraq and a U.S. troop presence in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the desire to avoid casualties—which led to the use of massive firepower in order to inflict huge Iraqi losses and a swift victory, followed by immediate American departure—set a precedent which the authors fear will be repeated often in the coming years. They see presidents continuing to seek cheap victories around the world; they see America laying waste to small countries and going home to celebrate; and they are clearly sickened by the prospect.

The authors do here identify some very troubling themes. Certainly, the "deeply ingrained American habit of willing grand ends through only modest means" has plagued us throughout this century. Prime recent examples were the assurances of the Nixon Doctrine and the Reagan Doctrine that other nations, such as the Shah's Iran, or guerrilla forces like Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in Angola, or the Afghan rebels, would fight Communism while American boys stayed safely at home. Tucker and Hendrickson make a powerful case that President Bush and his military advisers had this model very much in mind when they stopped the Gulf War abruptly, leaving Saddam Hussein in power, and leaving the fate of the Kurds and other opponents of Saddam in his hands. When the authors argue that having gone to war, we were morally obligated to take the further small steps required to dislodge Saddam and protect those who had rebelled with our encouragement, they are persuasive.

They also present a penetrating critique of the Bush administration's version of the new world order. First, they note that Bush's view is a very far cry from the Wilsonian goal of a world "safe for democracy" or Ronald Reagan's own campaign to extend the frontiers of the free world even at the risk of greater disorder. "For Bush," they write, "the new world order [is] the status quo." Whether the American people will find this new and essentially custodial role equally appealing is, as they say, debatable.

ELLIOTT ABRAMS, *who served as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from 1985 to 1989, is now a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.*

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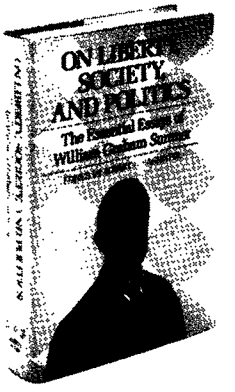

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They identify other problems as well. The new world order is a code of behavior for *states*, but as Tucker and Hendrickson correctly contend, "the principal threats to order after the Gulf War stem . . . from the disintegration of existing states as a result of the insistence of peoples on self-determination." Under George Bush, the United States has been notably unsympathetic to democratic forces trying to dissolve states or change borders: Croatians, Tibetans, Ukrainians, Estonians. (The *non*-democratic PLO is a glaring exception.) Prizing stability, we have slighted both democracy and nationalism. This formula is not only foreign to American ideals, it is also failing to cope with the remarkable changes we see day after day.

YET despite its virtues, *The Imperial Temptation* remains in the end a captive of its own informing impulse, which is a scream of protest against the Gulf War. As such, it falls prey to the sin of overgeneralization, extrapolating from one particular and very brief episode to theorize about a whole new orientation which that episode may or may not exemplify. The arguments adduced by the authors in order to support their thesis range from the irrelevant to the bizarre.

On the issue of war casualties, for example, Tucker and Hendrickson believe that America in the Gulf failed the test of "proportionality." We have made, they write, a

> Faustian bargain—a contract with the devil in which the means by which war is made palatable to us have the inescapable concomitant of increasing the misery inflicted on others.

We then justify this bargain by

> habitually employ[ing] a peculiar moral arithmetic in calculating the costs of war, in which the moral total of such costs largely depends upon the identity of those whose lives are being counted.

This is particularly unfair, the authors say, in the case of a dictatorship such as Iraq, where

> despite the Bush administration's insistence . . . on applying to Iraq a doctrine of collective responsibility, it would be difficult to make out a claim that Iraq's men, women, and children bore general responsibility for the sins of their rulers.

These arguments take us into strange territory. Is it indeed so "peculiar," or morally improper, for a nation and its leaders to value the lives of their countrymen—their own fathers and sons (and, more recently, mothers and daughters)—over those of the strangers who are shooting at them? Could any nation survive which had degenerated so far as to fail *that* simple test? And what, in the real world, was the alternative: would an old-fashioned land attack on Kuwait, in which equal numbers of Iraqi and American soldiers died, have been morally preferable? In spite of the massive American force assembled in the desert, most military experts initially predicted weeks of war and thousands of American casualties; have their fears been so soon forgotten?

IT IS, of course, true that Iraqis did not vote for the war, but can Tucker and Hendrickson really mean to suggest that the more despicable a regime, the more restrained should be the military operation against it? The states whose people have the least to say about the aggression they commit also tend to be the most evil states, and the ones most likely to commit aggression again.

In fact, the authors never come to grips with the problem of evil at all. Analogizing international to domestic conflict, they write that

> domestic peace is not threatened in the first instance by the errant behavior of individuals but by the deep dissatisfaction of large groups. . . . It is by the processes of politics rather than of law that the peace of domestic society is maintained.

Applying this view to world politics, they warn against "rigid legalism" and urge us not to dismiss attempts "to understand the motives that led to aggression" as well as "the historical context in which an act of aggression took place. . . ."

This sort of talk is reminiscent of the "insecurity" that was so often invoked during the cold war as an excuse for Soviet aggression. But one cannot explain Iraq's aggression against Kuwait by referring either to "the deep dissatisfaction of large groups" or, for that matter, to the "errant behavior of individuals," while ignoring the fact that there was, and still is, an evil dictator in Baghdad. And as for the "historical context" of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, one can easily appreciate it and still believe that war was a justified response.

In evading the question of evil, Tucker and Hendrickson also downplay the issue of Iraq's possession of weapons of nuclear destruction. To them, preventive war is a violation of international law and American tradition; they mention, only to dismiss, the enormous benefits to world peace that resulted from Israel's attack on the Osirak reactor in 1981 and America's destruction of Iraqi facilities in 1991. Surely it is they who are guilty here of a "rigid legalism," if not of moral blindness.

FINALLY, however, it is the idea that America has become subject to a new "imperial temptation" that is itself deeply questionable. Even the authors concede that

> there was nothing in the Gulf experience which set aside the lesson that public support for a foreign policy requiring substantial sacrifice could only be assured provided it could be demonstrated that vital security interests of the nation are at stake.

True enough, and a simple look around would underline the importance of this insight. America could easily have decided to occupy Iraq; it recoiled from that task. Today, politicians are scrambling to pare down the military budget, cancel weapons systems, and close military bases at home and overseas. The fear that we will seek to intervene everywhere has been neatly put to bed in Yugoslavia and Haiti, where we are carefully staying out.

In short, the rhetoric our leaders used in the Gulf War might have seemed to justify regular and

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ongoing interventions to right wrongs around the globe; our *behavior* suggests something else altogether. Tucker and Hendrickson have given us a useful sermon about America's unique moral role in world politics, but their fears lead them to exaggerate the attractiveness of imperialism to most Americans. As has been true for over two centuries, neutrality is at least as strong a temptation to Americans—and at the moment it is the more perilous one.

The Old Neighborhood

THE DEATH OF AN AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY: A TRAGEDY OF GOOD INTENTIONS. By HILLEL LEVINE and LAWRENCE HARMON. *Free Press. 370 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by PHILIP GOUREVITCH

IT IS an old story, oft-lamented and oft-repeated: the mainstream of American Jewish life no longer runs down the tight, colorful streets of America's inner cities, their multiple-dwelling buildings teeming with extended families and the sounds and smells of the old country. The inner city is the old country now, and it is an address few of its exiles honestly desire to resume—except perhaps as a memory swaddled in nostalgia. For most, the journey to suburbia is a passage of social arrival. But there are others who are forced out of their old neighborhoods and who leave reluctantly; they head for the suburbs not as the conquering heroes of middle-class success but as refugees from soaring crime rates. These last-to-leaves tend to be the elderly and poor, those most rooted and those least mobile. They sell their homes at a loss, and count themselves lucky to get out in one piece.

In *The Death of an American Jewish Community*, Hillel Levine, a Jewish historian, and Lawrence Harmon, a former editor of Boston's *Jewish Advocate*, tell a story of the latter type of Jews—40,000 of them, who fled their old Boston neighborhood of Mattapan over a two-year period of urban terror in the late 1960's. The subtitle of this book, "A Tragedy of Good Intentions," refers to the program of social engineering which, the authors argue, caused the wholesale destruction of Jewish Mattapan.

In the wake of the riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, a group of 22 Boston bankers created a cartel to offer federally insured, low-cost housing loans to blacks who wished to participate in the American dream of home-ownership. The Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group, or B-BURG, was launched with the blessings of an array of politicians and community leaders who spoke cheerily of an integrated city of the future and declared home ownership a sure way to instill middle-class values in the long-marginalized black underclass.

Given the history of other urban-renewal projects in Boston in the 60's, however, there was little reason to be optimistic about B-BURG. Earlier ventures had ended in disaster, with the financial ruin of developers and traumatic displacement of the Italian and black communities being "renewed." If B-BURG were really an exercise of good intentions, as Levine and Harmon repeatedly assert, its sponsors might have taken the time to consider what they were up to, and to think through the repercussions.

But by the authors' own account, the real motivation was not so much good will as fear. B-BURG was conceived in great haste, and in direct response to the demands of black militants for complete control of their own community and financial "reparations." Even Mayor Kevin White recalled thinking of the bankers, "They're shaking like quivering boys." Practically speaking, then, the loan program was a throw-the-dog-a-bone effort to buy off the threat of further upheavals.

OFFICIALLY, the idea was that any poor person, black or white, was eligible for a B-BURG loan to buy a home, with little or no downpayment, in whatever neighborhood he found one. In practice, however, the B-BURG bankers were not at all prepared to promote across-the-board integration in greater Boston. Rather, they took a map and a red pen and drew a line around an area of Mattapan, an area which

> almost to the house, corresponded to the precise inner-city locus of one ethnic group—Boston's Jewish community. . . . It was there, and only there, that low-interest, small-downpayment loans would be made to the city's minority home-seekers.

Twenty years later, Carl Ericson, the banker who drew the line, told Levine and Harmon that he had no idea he was painting a bullseye around Jewish Boston; his pen was simply guided by local "topographical" landmarks. But the authors endorse the far more plausible view of Hale Champion, Boston's urban-planning czar of the time, who states plainly that in a city of

PHILIP GOUREVITCH, *who contributed "The Jeffries Affair" to our March 1992 issue, is New York bureau chief of the* Forward.

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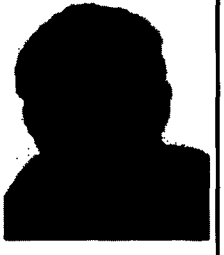

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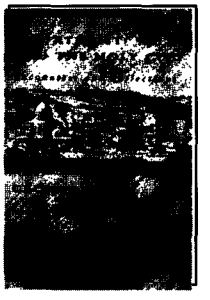

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tough Irish and nearly-as-tough Italians, the Jews were perceived as the only whites who would not fight integration with might and main. "Everything that happened here was intentional," a local Catholic priest said later. "The Jews were the easiest to move."

Indeed, since 1950 many Jews had moved out of Mattapan on their own, and a growing number of Jewish schools and synagogues had been abandoned—or sold to black groups. Those Jews who remained were committed to staying, and many were eager to work for the integration of their neighborhood. If there were good intentions that met tragic fates in the story Levine and Harmon tell, they belonged to these Jewish citizens of Mattapan, not to B-BURG, which had no sooner mapped its red line than it began dealing out mortgages at an astonishing clip.

Almost immediately, Blue Hill Avenue, for nearly a century the main thoroughfare of Boston Jewish life, became an encampment of the most unscrupulous breed of real-estate brokers. The red line served as a green light to blockbusters, who worked the already frayed nerves of the area's Jews with horror stories of impending assault, burglary, and rape. If a Jew could not be scared into selling out cheap, realtors did not hesitate to stage burglaries or issue anonymous death threats by phone in the wee hours of the night.

Nor did the brokers have to stretch their imaginations or their interventions too far. Crime did increase, as if in direct proportion to the issuance of B-BURG mortgages. Old Jews were taunted and mugged, housewives were beaten, synagogues burglarized, and Torah scrolls destroyed in arson attacks. The local public school, once a star of the city system, became a battleground. A young rabbi was called to his door one night by two young black men; while one handed him a note the other threw acid in his face, severely burning and nearly blinding him. The note read: "Lead the Jewish racists out of Mattapan."

LEVINE and Harmon have done an extraordinary job of historical research in piecing together, from documents and interviews, the many minute elements of this dismal chapter in the process that urban sociologists call "ethnic succession." As an exposé of B-BURG's gross disregard for the city it purported to be saving, *The Death of an American Jewish Community* deserves high marks and makes for absorbing reading. Yet the book's flaws ultimately balance out its strengths.

On a purely formal level the text is a very clunky affair; the narrative reaches forward and backward in time, and is rife with digressions which neither enlighten the reader nor advance the central story. There are also endless redundancies—the same person is introduced and identified again and again, the same fact restated, the same catch phrase repeated. This carelessness signals a deeper problem, the abdication of a key task of authorship: the sifting and selection of information. In their eagerness to present a complete picture of Jewish Boston since World War II, Levine and Harmon wind up with a tale that wanders and often seems to contradict itself, leaving the impression of two authors confused by a story they seemed on the brink of clarifying.

From its subtitle and opening chapters, *The Death of an American Jewish Community* appears to promise a critique of a liberal social policy that fell on its own sword. In the end, however, the authors have equally harsh things to say about the response of major American Jewish organizations to the crisis. According to Levine and Harmon, the numerous agencies and philanthropies which serve as an unofficial Jewish community government essentially abandoned the Jews of Mattapan in the face of B-BURG and its attendant street criminals. The indifference of the agencies and their suburbanite leaders—obsessed with public relations, fund-raising, and the evasion of controversy—left a gaping hole that was eventually filled by the Jewish Defense League (JDL). And when the Jewish Community Council did try to act in Mattapan it was, according to the authors, a case of too little too late, an effort to save face which barely succeeded at that limited goal.

In part, the case the authors make against the Jewish Community Council and the Anti-Defamation League—among others—is persuasive. (It is certainly familiar to anyone who heard the complaints voiced last summer when similar organizations were slow in responding to the rioting in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.) But criticizing Jewish organizational leadership is an old saw for Levine, who appears briefly as a third-person character in this book as the leader of a dissident contingent at the 1968 General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Boston. And to blame the demise of Jewish Mattapan on the conduct of Jewish community leaders flies in the face of the wealth of powerful evidence the authors have themselves marshaled.

Toward the end of this book, the claim is made that earlier intervention by Jewish communal agencies might have saved the neighborhood; but it is hard to see how. Jewish organizations—even the JDL—cannot stop crime, and crime is what finally drove the Jews out. Not even B-BURG and the realtors who cashed in on it, corrupt and unsound and ill-intentioned as they may have been, can be held responsible for the violence that was visited on Boston's Jews. Nor, finally, does an exploration of class divisions within the Jewish community—a "dirty little secret" which the authors seek to explode—explain why it became impossible for relatively poor Jews to go on living safely in their old neighborhoods.

IN THEIR effort to avoid examining the thorny and discouraging questions of black criminality and the crisis of black leadership that has been mounting steadily in the years since King's murder, Levine and Harmon appear to take it for granted that less is to be expected of blacks than of Jews. This double standard is the fault line that runs through their book. On the one hand, the authors are capable of comparing the elimination of Jews from Mattapan to the Holocaust, as if getting mugged

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and moving to Newton has anything in common with being shipped to Auschwitz; on the other hand, they conclude that many of the moral failings in their story lie with the Jewish leaders.

When they are not blaming B-BURG or Jewish leadership, Levine and Harmon look to vague, impersonal "forces." In their introduction they note that "America's foremost neighborhood organizer, Saul Alinsky, once observed that 'integration is the time between when the first black family moves in and the last white family moves out.'" And they add: "This book may explain some of the reasons why Alinsky's observations cannot be dismissed as mere sarcasm." The book does that, but Levine and Harmon fail to grasp how. In the story of B-BURG they find evidence that the rifts which have developed between Jews and blacks since the days of their early civil-rights alliances are largely a function "of the elusive forces that are external to their communities and function independently of both their wills and interests." This is the old argument that some mysterious "they" is playing the two groups off against each other—at best, an inadequate account either of Mattapan or of the national scene over the past quarter-century.

Levine and Harmon's vision of urban decay is blind-sided by its own form of nostalgia: nostalgia for the 1960's, with its "good intentions" and its innocent dreams of racial harmony. Little surprise, then, that in the end the authors retreat from the story they have uncovered—the story of the demise of urban liberalism in the wake of black militance and violence—and leap instead to this unlikely conclusion:

> With myopic optimism but certainly without malice, American Jews encouraged blacks to get ahead. Jews failed to recognize the unique obstacles that blacks would face, particularly in the intransigence of housing discrimination. This led to Jewish impatience with blacks and black frustration with Jews. . . . Entangled as they are in the "social structural undergrowth" of ethnic relations in America, it is no wonder that they are unable to find common cause and common ground.

At one point in this book Levine and Harmon allude to Irving Kristol's famous adage that a neoconservative is a liberal who has been mugged by reality. For their own part, they prove unable to accept either reality or its muggings.

Poetry and Gender

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY: SELECTED POEMS. THE CENTENARY EDITION. Edited by COLIN FALCK. *HarperCollins. 162 pp. $18.00.*

Reviewed by EVELYN TOYNTON

LITERATURE being an art in which women have acquitted themselves rather spectacularly, it remains perplexing that their greatest achievements should seem to be confined to prose. Yet, in Anglo-American literature at least, which boasts numerous major women novelists, there have been very few major women poets. Perhaps an argument might be made that, entering relatively late into the field, many 19th-century women poets were so daunted by the example of their great male predecessors that they tended to retreat into safely "female" sentiments and moral pieties, rather than attempting heroic conceits. But one wonders if women might not simply have more of a temperamental affinity for fiction—in which "human interest" is paramount—than for poetry; i.e., if their genius tends to be psychological rather than metaphysical. (It may be telling that Emily Dickinson, who created a poetry of pure spirit, seems to have been in some profound way asexual.)

Of course, the idea that women have rarely produced great poetry is hardly one that the feminists would assent to. On the front page of the New York *Times Book Review* recently, a woman poet alleged that in the years between the two world wars Elinor Wylie, Genevieve Taggard, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sara Teasdale, HD, and Louise Bogan produced "a body of American lyric poetry worthy of comparison with Elizabethan song in beauty and intensity." But it is hard not to feel that all the poets cited are finally too slight to be included in the pantheon of the greats. Someone like Sara Teasdale, for example, for all her lyric gifts ("When I am dead, and over me bright April/ Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,/ Though you should lean above me, broken-hearted,/ I shall not care"), nevertheless seems like the kind of poet one can take entirely seriously only in adolescence—just as one can wholly embrace the feverish sorrows of the English *fin-de-siècle* poet Ernest Dowson ("Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine,/ There fell thy shadow, Cynara!") only when one is very young. But whereas, once the passions of adolescence have been outgrown, it is easy to find male successors to Dowson in one's esteem (perhaps his fellow member of the Rhymers' Club, W.B. Yeats),

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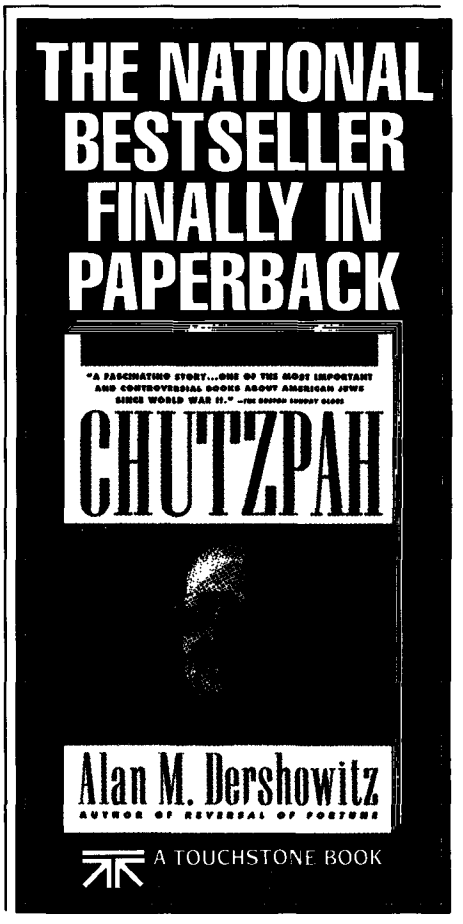

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it is difficult to find female ones to Teasdale.

Not that great poetry seems "gender-specific." Instead, of course, it transcends gender. "Shall our blood fail? Or shall it come to be/ The blood of paradise? And shall the earth/ Seem all of paradise that we shall know?" Is that a male point of view? Or, "Not in entire forgetfulness,/ And not in utter nakedness,/ But trailing clouds of glory do we come/ From God, who is our home"? Or—in the case of love poetry—"Love is not love/ That alters when it alteration finds/ Or bends with the remover to remove"? Or, "Let me powre forth/ My tears before thy face, whilst I stay here/ For thy face coines them, and thy stampe they beare"? Or, "But in my arms till break of day/ Let the living creature lie,/ Mortal, guilty, but to me/ The entirely beautiful"? And yet all those lines were written by men (Wallace Stevens, Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Donne, W.H. Auden, respectively), and the quality of ecstasy we find in them is somehow very different from the breathless note—ecstasy without intellectual rigor, without *gravitas*—found in certain women poets who made ecstasy something of a stock in trade.

CHIEF among those women purveyors of ecstasy is Edna St. Vincent Millay, whose reputation, in decline for many years, is now being reexamined in various quarters. To celebrate the centenary of her birth, a volume of her *Selected Poems* has been issued, complete with a solemnly reverential foreword by Richard Eberhart, who writes, "I worshipped Millay as a possessor of immortality. She was too beautiful to live among mortals. She symbolized Platonic beauty." (Imagine anyone writing such gush about Yeats!) And Colin Falck, the editor of the volume, begins his introduction by telling us that her "poetry combines spiritual intensity with intellectual sophistication," before going on to compare her "unworldly fervor" to that of Kafka and Dostoevsky and to call her

> the finest American lyricist of the 20th century, . . . a lyricist who is capable of incorporating a wide-ranging, sophisticated, and philosophically profound kind of thought into her emotional apprehensions.

In a prominent piece on this collection in the New York *Times Book Review*, a contemporary woman poet complains of the "assiduity with which the literary establishment has neglected" Millay, ascribing this neglect primarily to the fact that

> the body of her work is brought repeatedly to bear upon the question of what it is to be a woman. . . . [T]he male canon remains fairly steady over time, while women poets—ostensibly much sought-after in anthologies—are shuffled around like a deck of cards in a gambling casino.

WHAT, then, do we find when we turn to the poems themselves? First of all, in the early work, archness and shallow ironies on the one hand, melodrama on the other. It is not hard to see why Millay has sometimes been lumped together with such wisecracking sophisticates as Dorothy Parker—who openly acknowledged Millay's influence on her own poems about unrequited love—even though Millay's was the much greater talent. But "I shall forget you presently, my dear,/ So make the most of this, your little day" might be Parker; and so might "Time does not bring relief; you all have lied/ Who told me time would ease me of my pain!"

Over and over again we come upon the pose of a defiant woman, pledged to love and pain and experience, defying convention and/or death. But more than with either Dowson or Teasdale, the pose Millay adopts seems neither truly earned nor even truly felt. No doubt the stale poetic conventions she employs to express her supposed defiance of convention are at least partly responsible for this impression: "O World, I cannot hold thee close enough!/ Thy winds, thy wide gray skies!/ Thy mists that roll and rise!" Or, in another instance of sloppy apostrophizing: "Tiresome heart, forever living and dying,/ House without air, I leave you and lock your door./ Wild swans, come over the town, come over/ The town again, trailing your legs and crying!" Instead of doing the emotional labor that might lead to a real illumination of complex feelings—instead of "ly[ing] down where all the ladders start" (Yeats)—she has settled for a pretty pose, a girlish toss of the head. And neither her heart nor the swans seem truly observed here; it is merely coy, surely, to call one's own heart tiresome.

AS FALCK justly points out, the cadenced free verse and internal rhymes that later in Millay's career began to replace her earlier, mechanical meters and rhyme schemes represent an impressive technical achievement. But the lack of specificity and concreteness in her language persists, unfortunately, in her mature work. Even "New England Spring 1942," which both Falck and the *Times* reviewer rightly single out for praise, seems marred by a certain triteness:

> But Spring is wise. Pale and
> with gentle eyes, one day
> somewhat she advances;
> The next, with a flurry of snow
> into flake-filled skies retreats
> before the heat in our eyes,
> and the thing designed
> By the sick and longing mind in
> its lonely fancies—
> The sally which would force her
> and take her.
> And Spring is kind.
> Should she come running
> headlong in a wind-whipped
> acre
> Of daffodil skirts down the
> mountain into this dark valley
> we would go blind.

It is as though Millay's intelligence here were a wholly musical one; the shifts in meter are beautifully handled, that "somewhat" is perfectly placed, the tone of wildness and sadness is finely achieved, and yet—"Pale and with gentle eyes"? "Lonely fancies"? And would even a "sick and longing mind" really fantasize about a "sally" that will "force and take" spring? Who ever wanted to rape spring, even in a metaphorical sense? There seems to be more sensibility here than sense; the quasi-mysticism of the last lines is itself a little pat,

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amounting to a dramatic effect rather than a revelation of nature's mystery.

IT IS hard not to feel that Millay, for all that she embraced the role of the emancipated woman, was somehow unable to emancipate herself from a certain kind of stereotypical "femininity" prevalent in her day, almost a kind of mental flirtatiousness that leads her to surrender too easily to sentimentality rather than holding out for honesty. (This, at least, is a failing that no female poet writing today can be accused of.) It might be said that what she lacks is toughness of mind—precisely the quality that Marianne Moore, for one, possessed in abundance.

There is no point in excoriating Millay on these grounds, but it is ironic that a dead poet should wind up being praised by the feminists for displaying a brand of femininity they would abhor in a living woman. And it will be a pity if, in the service of political correctness, such poets as Millay and Teasdale are now exalted to a stature that, for whatever reasons, they never really earned.

Toward Yugoslavia?

THE DISUNITING OF AMERICA: REFLECTIONS ON A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY. By ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR. *Norton. 160 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by HEATHER MACDONALD

ORIGINALLY published by Whittle Direct Books and now reissued with an expanded foreword, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* is an uncompromising look at the fraud of multiculturalism and Afrocentrism. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s eminence as a historian—he currently holds the Albert Schweitzer chair in the humanities at the City University of New York—has not protected him, or his book, from the usual smears. Ishmael Reed, a novelist who teaches English at Berkeley, has denounced Schlesinger as a "follower of David Duke," and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., professor of English and Afro-American studies at Harvard, has caricatured Schlesinger's arguments as a "demand [for] cultural white-face."

While predictable, the hostile response to *The Disuniting of America* is nevertheless particularly discouraging, for it is difficult to imagine a book expressing greater compassion for the racial frustrations which Schlesinger sees as fueling Afrocentrism, or greater candor about the past injustices of American society and historiography. If such a book—as frank about America's failings as about those of multiculturalism—is dismissed as neo-Nazi propaganda, then good-faith discussion has been all but foreclosed.

Schlesinger's thesis is that the current cult of ethnicity imperils the very basis of the American experiment. Although multiculturalists may think they own the patent on "diversity," Schlesinger shows that diversity has been America's trademark since inception. Our unique admixture of peoples has prompted both native-born and foreign observers to ask: what can hold so variegated a nation together? From the 18th to the 20th century the answer has remained constant: the "American Creed." As Gunnar Myrdal wrote in 1944, Americans hold in common "the *most explicitly expressed* system of general ideals" of any country in the West: the ideals of equality and the inalienable rights to freedom, justice, and opportunity. It is adherence to those ideals, not one's race, original nationality, or ethnicity, that makes one an American.

TODAY, says Schlesinger, the American identity is in jeopardy as multiculturalism and Afrocentrism elevate racial and ethnic over na-

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PROOFTEXTS

A Journal of Jewish Literary History

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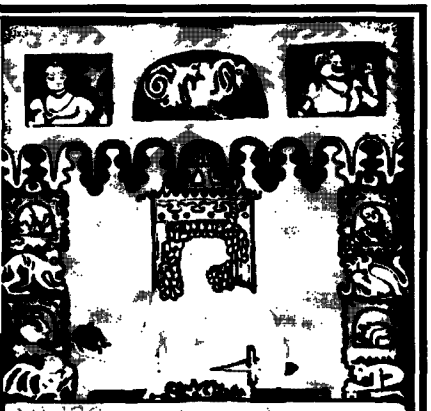

A Night in the Old Marketplace

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 1 features a never-before-published translation by Hillel Halkin of I. L. Peretz's masterpiece of modern Yiddish drama, "A Night in the Old Marketplace." The issue also includes essays about this extraordinary play, including one by Halkin himself. Subscribe now for a full year (3 issues) and receive this exciting issue! Or, if you wish, you can order just a single copy.

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tional affiliation. At the end of this road, he warns, lie Yugoslavia and other contemporary battlegrounds of racial and ethnic separatism. While the analogy may seem a touch overwrought, there can be no question that multiculturalists are playing with weapons that can wreak havoc on our already inadequate schools, our social structure, and economy.

Separatist ideas of history are among those weapons. To be sure, today's multiculturalists and Afrocentrists are hardly the first to revise history. During previous waves of American ethnic consciousness, Schlesinger points out, underdog groups similarly fabricated their own "compensatory" versions of history—what the historian John V. Kelleher calls the "there's-always-an-Irishman-at-the-bottom-of-it-doing-the-real-work approach to American history." The crucial difference, however, is that those earlier movements never sought to impose their ethnocentric mythologies on the public-school curriculum.

By contrast, Afrocentrists, who place Africa at the source of the world's cultural and scientific achievements, view the teaching of history in the schools as a tool for group empowerment and for the advancement of group self-esteem. Such "therapeutic" uses of history undermine what Schlesinger sees as the true purpose of historical study: "the recognition of complexity and the search for knowledge." Moreover, as Diane Ravitch, now an Assistant Secretary of Education, has warned, "Once ethnic pride and self-esteem become the criterion for teaching history, certain things cannot be taught" in the schools. Proscribed subjects include (in Schlesinger's formulation) "the tyrannous authority [of African emperors], the ferocity of their wars, the tribal massacres, the squalid lot of the common people, . . . [and] the complicity with the Atlantic slave trade."

As for what *is* being taught, the twin pillars of Afrocentrism are the claims that the West stole its culture from Egypt, and that Egypt was black. Schlesinger debunks both these fallacies, and disproves as well the relationship between ethnocentric education and self-esteem or academic achievement. Self-esteem, he notes, originates not in racial pride but in personal achievement and family encouragement, while the presence or absence of ethnic role models in the curriculum has no known correlation with academic success.

The connection between Afrocentric education and American black identity is even more tenuous, Schlesinger boldly argues. Since the early 19th century, most black leaders have repudiated the notion that they are Africans first, Americans second. The current cult of "self-Africanization," among a people who no longer have an authentic relation to Africa, Schlesinger dismisses as "play-acting." Most damning of all, he concludes, Afrocentric pedagogy works against the very goals it claims to be pursuing, since nothing could be more cunningly designed to retard the social and economic progress of black children than the new form of segregation represented by black-only public schools, the deemphasis of logic in favor of emotive forms of expression, and the encouragement of "black" English.

IN DEFENSE of their policies, multiculturalists routinely cite the sins of the European "canon" against which they are rebelling, an allegedly monolithic, exclusive, and intellectually repressive structure which, in the words of a leading Afrocentrist, is "killing [black] children, killing their minds." Western culture as a whole, they add, is the world's leading source of racism, imperialism, sexism, and all-around nastiness. Yet as Schlesinger points out, the Western canon—a fluid, immensely complex cultural inheritance that contains voices of rage and protest as well as voices of celebration and devotion—is precisely what has inspired the great black political theorists and philosophers, not to mention innumerable critics of the West both white and black.

What sets Europe apart from the rest of the world is not oppressiveness—its sins have been more than matched by Asia, the Middle East, and Africa—but rather the fact that Western oppression has "produced [its] own antidote":

> Whatever the particular crimes of Europe, that continent is also the source—the *unique* source—of those liberating ideas of individual liberty, political democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and cultural freedom that constitute our most precious legacy and to which most of the world today aspires. These are *European* ideas, not Asian, nor African, nor Middle Eastern ideas, except by adoption.

And though Schlesinger can be severe about the West's failure to live up to its ideals, including the treatment of blacks and other minorities, he is scathing on the relative merits of other cultures compared with ours:

> There is surely no reason for Western civilization to have guilt trips laid on it by champions of cultures based on despotism, superstition, tribalism, and fanaticism. In this regard the Afrocentrists are especially absurd. The West needs no lectures on the superior virtue of those "sun people" who sustained slavery until Western imperialism abolished it (and, it is reported, sustain it to this day in Mauritania and the Sudan), who still keep women in subjection and cut off their clitorises, who carry out racial persecutions not only against Indians and other Asians but against fellow Africans from the wrong tribes, who show themselves either incapable of operating a democracy or ideologically hostile to the democratic idea, and who in their tyrannies and massacre, their Idi Amins and Boukassas, have stamped with utmost brutality on human rights.

THE eloquence and erudition of *The Disuniting of America* make its hostile reception all the more disturbing. Reading this book, one is torn between admiration for its arguments and the sad conviction that they are utterly futile. To warn against the dissolution of our common national ideals and our common culture holds little threat for people who claim, however speciously, that they never shared those ideals and were never part of that culture.

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One of the most pernicious effects of multiculturalism has been to destroy the linguistic ground necessary to debate it. For such a debate would have to invoke terms like "we" and "commonality." Yet multiculturalists, aided by the sophisticated deconstructive efforts of literary theorists like Stanley Fish and Barbara Herrnstein Smith, reject any such appeal to an American "we" as an act of imperialist violence. The only language that remains is that of an increasingly narrow "us" versus an increasingly alien "them." This is the language of civil war.

Conspiracy Theory

OCTOBER SURPRISE. By GARY SICK. *Random House. 278 pp. $23.00.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL LEDEEN

FOR the substantial segment of the American intelligentsia which has still not digested Ronald Reagan's presidency, *October Surprise* offers some solace. According to Gary Sick, who served on the National Security Council staff of Jimmy Carter, Reagan's ascendancy in 1980 did not come about primarily as the result of the American political process; it was the outcome, instead, of a dark conspiracy, led by the Reagan campaign organization, to sustain the public's dissatisfaction with President Carter by delaying until after election day the release of American hostages being held in Iran. In return for their complicity with this plot, the Iranians were promised shipments of American arms. The conspiracy allegedly involved scores of American politicians; officials of the Khomeini regime in Iran; American, British, German, French, and Iranian arms dealers; and Israeli arms dealers and intelligence operatives.

Did all these individuals contrive to ensure that the Khomeini regime would not end the hostage crisis until after the November 1980 election? As it happens, five years later I found myself dealing with representatives of the Iranian regime on behalf of the Reagan administration. As I have written in *Perilous Statecraft* (1987), both the idea of having contacts with Iran and the method of establishing those contacts were proposed by non-Americans. The suggestion that the United States could usefully approach Iran came from a European official; the intermediary came from the Iranians themselves. Thousands of pages of sworn testimony in the Iran-*contra* hearings (and vigorous scrutiny by adversarial investigators) also attest to the fact that the Reagan administration then had *no other* channel of communication to Iran. If, as Sick asserts, there had actually been a working relationship between the Khomeini regime and the Reagan campaign staff five years earlier, would the administration have had to turn to outside consultants in 1985 to establish channels to Teheran?

But such considerations do not stop Sick—nor does the fact, even, that he has found no credible witnesses for his thesis. Sick's "sources" can best be characterized by looking at two of the most important. The first is Jamshid Hashemi, an Iranian arms dealer who claims that in the summer and fall of 1980 his brother Cyrus was arranging secret meetings between Iranian officials and *both* the Carter and Reagan teams. In fact, there is a great deal of evidence of such meetings by Carter representatives, but none with Reagan people. What FBI records indicate (according to a long account by Frank Snepp in the *Village Voice*) is that the Carter administration knew of Cyrus Hashemi's involvement in illegal arms deals with Iran, and allowed the deals to go forward because he was also setting up contacts for the administration with key Iranians. By contrast, when Cyrus Hashemi subsequently approached William Casey—who had been Reagan's campaign manager and was now director of the CIA—with an offer to help with a later generation of American hostages, he was turned down flat; a CIA report in 1985 described him as "only slightly less sleazy than his notorious brother Jamshid."

Sick's second key source is an Israeli by the name of Ari Ben-Menashe, who has variously described himself as an intelligence officer, a national-security adviser to Israel's prime minister, and an international arms dealer. Ben Menashe has claimed, *inter alia*, that as a member of an Israeli intelligence committee he helped cook the hostage-release deal; that he was present at an October 1980 meeting in Paris at which George Bush (then Reagan's running mate) met with both Iranian and Israeli officials to seal the deal; and that in payment for the Iranians' compliance he shipped weapons to Iran for six years.

Ben-Menashe's seemingly inexhaustible "information" is not limited to the "October Surprise." He has also alleged that in 1988 Robert Gates, then Deputy Director (now Director) of Central Intelligence, met with the infamous Chilean arms smuggler Carlos Cardoen in Santiago to arrange for shipments of chemical and biological weapons to Iraq. Ben-Menashe further claims that Gates personally received $1.5 million from Israel "to persuade him to discontinue the trade in chemical weapons to Iraq." These allegations were investigated by the FBI at the time of Gates's CIA confirmation hearings last year, and were found to be false.

Ben-Menashe's claims about his own career are equally dubious. The Israeli government has officially stated that Ben-Menashe never held an intelligence post, and has never worked in the prime minister's office. In the nine years in which he served as a low-level interpreter in the army, he was never promoted. Altogether, Ben-Menashe's credibility has by now been exposed many times over; he is, as Steven Emerson rightly characterized him in COMMENTARY (January 1992), nothing but an "abject fraud and impostor."

To round out his cast of characters, Sick also lengthily discusses a meeting in Washington among Richard Allen, Robert McFarlane, Laurence Silberman—Allen and Silberman were then on Reagan's campaign staff—and a fourth person, according to Sick an Iranian,

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perhaps by the name of Hushang Lavi. Lavi later claimed to have offered the three an arms-for-hostages deal. Allen and Silberman recall only that there was some offer to release the hostages, but no suggestion of a *quid pro quo*. All agree that the Reagan trio rejected any deal. Indeed, in a 1988 interview in *Playboy*, a year before he "remembered" this Washington meeting, Lavi himself, when asked about a deal "between the Reagan campaign and Khomeini," replied, "I am not aware of that."

OF SUCH stuff is *October Surprise* constructed—that, and dime-novel prose, endless use of the word "may" (as in "may have," "may be," "may perhaps"), and a good bit of old-fashioned Israel-bashing. According to Sick, Israelis acted as middlemen throughout, delivering to Iran the arms which Casey and others had promised. As evidence he cites a CIA report from late October 1980 referring to talks between Israel and Iran about "hostages-for-spares," little bothering to note that such a deal (assuming it would ever have come about) would have helped not the Reagan campaign—for it, according to Sick, was devoting all its efforts to *thwarting* a hostage release—but the sitting President, Jimmy Carter. Nor is this the only piece of "evidence" in Sick's book that points to conclusions opposite to his own. Thus, though he insists that Carter was unwilling to make arms-for-hostages deals, the material he adduces on Cyrus Hashemi, among others, shows that precisely such schemes were afoot. Even in direct negotiations with Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the Iranians were told that they could claim $300 million in "frozen" military equipment once the hostage matter was resolved.

SICK devotes considerable space to analyzing the deeper meaning of the "October Surprise." In particular, he condemns the failure of the "mainstream media" to expose the story of this massive political deception perpetrated on the American people. The reality is once again the reverse: if there has been a failure it has been in the willingness of the mainstream media to *endorse* the idea of an "October Surprise." The New York *Times* has given unprecedented amounts of op-ed space to Sick and other purveyors of such stories; on television, *Nightline* and *Frontline* in particular have broadcast much nonsense, presented as serious reportage. Sick's book has been published by a leading house, has received respectful reviews, and has reportedly won a movie option for half-a-million dollars.

What needs to be explained, then, is not the inattentiveness of the press but rather its avidity for stories like Sick's. Surely one reason is political: if Sick is right, then the 1980 election was, in effect, stolen from its rightful winner, Jimmy Carter. And if the election was stolen, then the whole Reaganite interlude in American politics, including the traumatic defeat of liberalism, was a fraud, or a trick, all based on an illegitimate, even criminal, usurpation of power.

There are no doubt other reasons as well for the popularity of theories like Sick's. It is titillating and satisfying to believe that some hidden hand is at work behind the fabric of history, manipulating both the course of events and our feeble efforts to understand them. But historical truth tends to be at once simpler and infinitely more complex than this; in any case, and putting it mildly, *October Surprise* is no place to go looking for historical truth.

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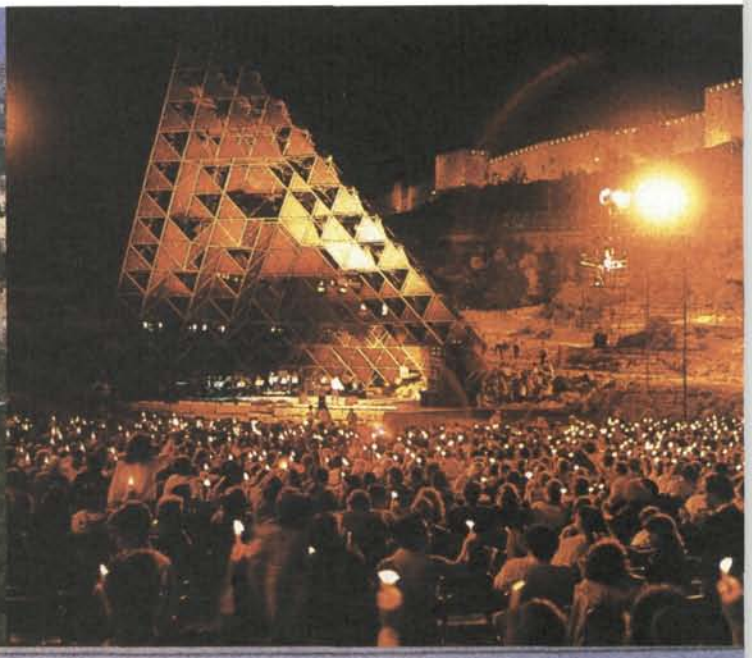

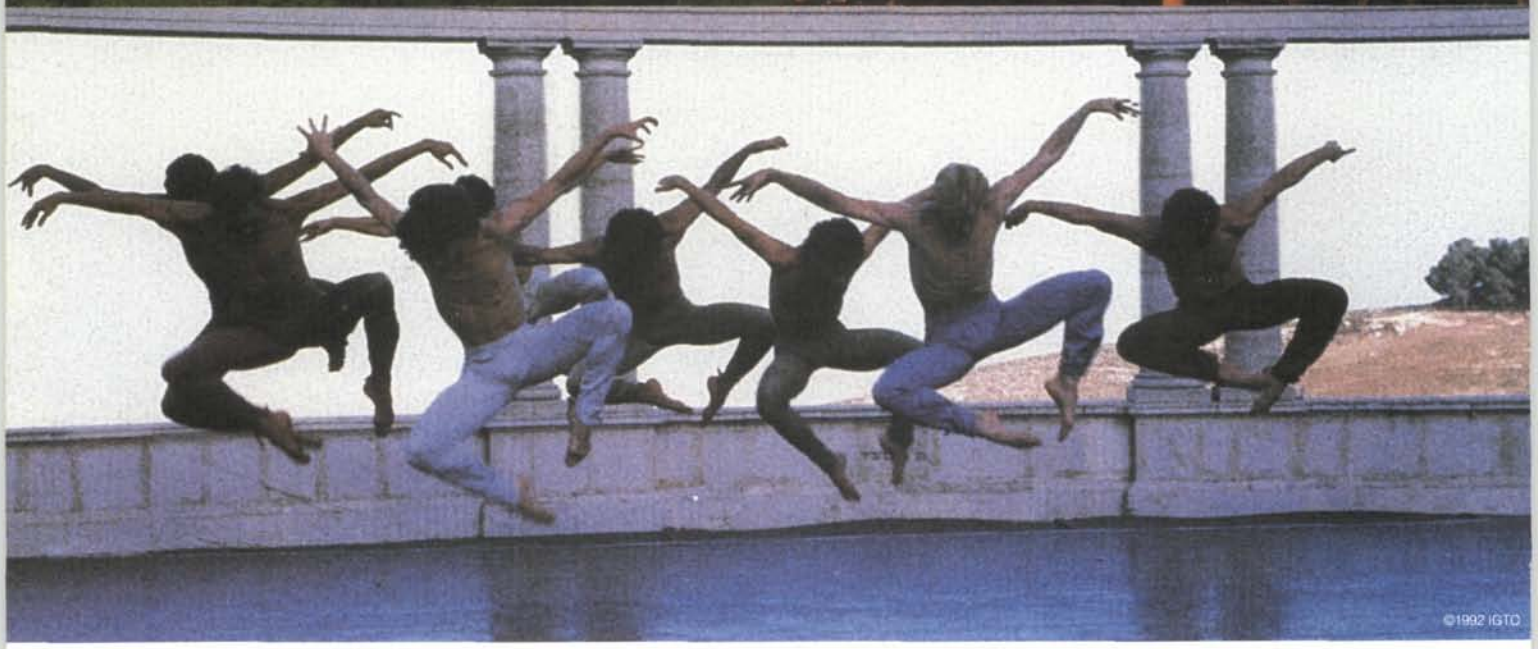

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